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WORLDWIDE SOCCER•FIGHTING VIPERS•HARDCORE 4X4

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MEAN MACHINES EXCLUSIVE





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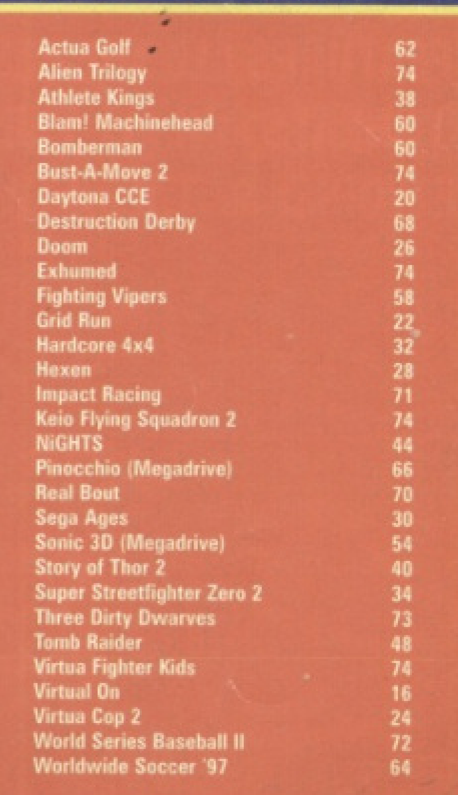


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AT A GLANCE

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EVERYTHiNG

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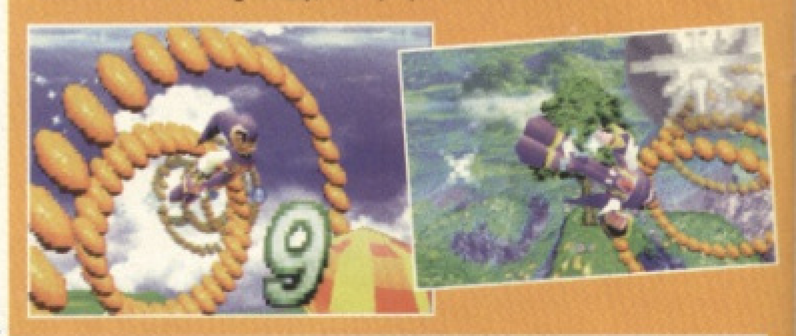
Has it been a month? It certainly doesn't seem so, as this has been one of the busiest for a long time. The team has been working hard on the long-awaited 'new look' for MEAN MACHINES, and you will see their handiwork in next month's issue, along with some amazing enticements (see Next Month for that).But the mag you are holding is not to be sniffed at, as we've got a staggering amount of news, spanning the major European game show in London, to the world's premier arcade game showcase in Japan. Snatching the first full preview of Virtual On is something we're particularly proud of — including the first two-player mode pictures. Lastly, to PJ, one of MEAN MACHINES most faithful adherents (and no mean artist), good luck and keep the faith.

GUS



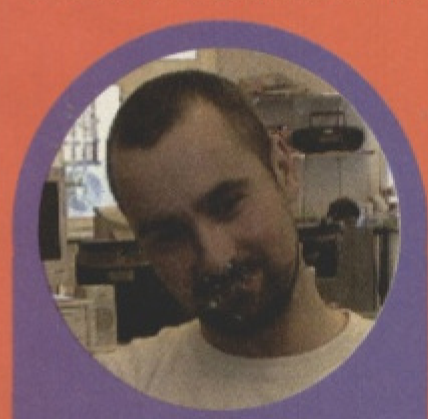
WHO'S THE MAN AT NiGHTS?

Probably the greatest score challenge game ever, NiGHTS offers an irresistable challenge which we'd like you Saturn warriors to pick up. We want scores! Send in your overall scores for each dream and best links for each course (they'll be in Dream Data). However, there's a catch. Your must be achieved with the correct boss for that dream, not your favourtie! So that's Gillwing for Spring Valley, Puffy for Splash Garden, Gulpo for Mystic Forest, Clawz for Frozen Bell, Jackle for Soft Museum and Reala for Stick Canyon . We'll start printing a league next month, and the grand winner will be in line for something really, really special. Trust us.



GAME OVER, YEAH!

We're saying goodbye to some familiar faces this month, as Claire, Marcus and Dan all bid MEAN MACHINES a fond farewell. Good riddance, we say.



GUS

Claire's departure means that the longest-serving member of the team is now something of an elder statesman figure. And the message from the bunker is that we are winning the war. "The desertion of my generals bothers me little," sneers Angus. "The punishment for deserters is execution. I shall be handling it personally." Gus has big plans for the future of the redesigned MEAN MACHINES, and isn't at all fazed by the current changes in staff. Reports of his recent erratic behaviour have been exaggerated. "That vacuum cleaner was asking for it," he growls. "And that's not a twitch – I've just had something in my eye recently." So, as the age of a brand new MEAN MACHINES dawns, what are Gus's hopes and intentions for the UK's flagship Sega title? "Lemon meringue pantyhose."



CLAIRE

An era has drawn to a close – after more than three years designing MEAN MACHINES SEGA, Claire Coulthard is waving goodbye. "I'm going to miss the magazine a lot," she sniffs, "but I've got a smart new job on top girls' mag It's Bliss so I'll be able to blag loads of clothes and lipstick and stuff. That should keep my pecker up if I ever get depressed." When Claire started on the UK's top Sega mag, she was part of a team that included such legendary names as Oz Brown, Rad Automatic and Jaz Rignall. "I've got a lot of happy memories, and I met my boyfriend (Sega Saturn Magazine's Dave Kelsall) when I was working here. It's been fun!" Before she breaks a thousand hearts, Claire has a message... "I'd like to say a big goodbye to everyone and blow you all a big kiss. Ta da!"



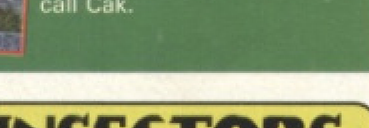
MARCUS

"When Claire told me she was resigning I decided I just couldn't face coming into the office if she wasn't here," says Marcus. "So I resigned as well. This is my last issue of MEAN MACHINES – I'm going to work for Titan Books as the new editor of Star Wars Magazine. It's going to be smart." Marcus joined the mag as deputy editor last summer. "It's time for a change – MEAN MACHINES is going to be revamped from the next issue and some new people should help give the whole thing a kick up the bum. Before I go, both Claire and I would lile to say a big thank you to Mark at Sega. Ta!" There is just one more thing... "Well, I suppose I ought to come clean," he confesses. "It's me that writes the silly little 'personality boxes' on the editorial pages." The mystery's solved. So who's writing this then?





Contrary to what you may have heard, the Megadrive is still alive and well this month, as Sonic 3D testifies. We've reached the sixth generation of Megadrive games (Toy Story, Sonic 3D) and Sega have performed miracles with 16bit hardware that we never even dreamed were possible. But it wasn't always like this. Cast your mind back to the release of the Megadrive in 1990 and the original line up of software: Ghouls'n'Ghosts – amazing!, Golden Axe – arcade perfect, Altered Beast – er, Cack! That's right, Sega's first ever coin-op conversion was a shambling travesty of a 2D beat 'em up that was an insult to both Sega and the coin-op original. The 'morph into an animal' gameplay was incredibly poor, and malformed sprites moved with all the grace of Stephen Hawking trying to tapdance. A worthy entry into the corner that some call Cak.





NICK

"I'm definitely not leaving," asserts Nick. That's a relief. And talking of relief, Nick's perks have been of an above average quality recently. "Yeah," he wriggles in his seat. "I met Joanne Guest at the ECTS show. She was shaking her thang in the Acclaim cabaret, looking really fit. I spotted this vision of loveliness having a quick fag behind the stand so I asked her to sign my copy of MEAN MACHINES." What did she write? "Next to the picture of me she wrote 'Phwooaarr, sexy dude. Love, Joanne Guest.' After that she asked me if she could come back to my place. I had to say no, however." Why – because you were partying all night or because you already had a hot chick waiting? "Er, well, my mum says I'm not allowed to have girls in my room."



DAN

The MEAN MACHINES migration continues with Mr Jevons, who's barely been here long enough to leave. "I just couldn't stand it any longer," he grumbles. "No, actually I've had an offer I can't refuse – I'm going to work on GameFan magazine in the US of A." Dan, who's swapping Farringdon for Beverly Hills, was initially attracted by the superb transfer package, exciting opportunities and sheer prestige of the job. "But then I thought sod that – I'm going for the beach and the babes!" Dan's perfecting a Lord Snooty-type persona to amuse his American colleagues (in fact he's been working on it for about 22 years) and is banking on breaking into the movies before Christmas. He's already packed a crowbar and a pair of wirecutters. Toodle-pip Dan – it's been a grin.

INSECTORS GIVEAWAY!

Insektors is the psychedelic computer-animated show that charts the chucklesome adventures of a bunch of insects, butterflies and beetles. Each story is about another battle in the war between the Verigreens who live in the lucious Flower City and the malicious Kruds who live on the dark side of the Black Planet. Apart from top characters like Draffsack, Godfrey and Queen Catheter, what really makes this show is the gobsmacking computer animation. Insektors is back on the telly in October, but Channel 4 Video have given us Volumes One and Two of their new Insektors tapes to give away to the winners of our latest compo. Each tape contains a bunch of episodes and is on sale now at £9.99, but you could be among the five winners who'll pick up Volumes 1 & 2 for free if you answer this question correctly. Which recent Disney movie was entirely computer animated?

Put your answer on the back of a sealed-down envelope or postcard and send it to CREEPY CRAWLIES at the editorial address.

UNUSUAL SUSPECTS

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Angus 'eh??!?! 'Swan
EX ART EDITOR
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DESIGNER
Nick 'erm, Mean Machines' Paterson
BEACH BOY
Dan 'Game Fan' Jevons

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FREELANCERS
Radion Automatic
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Helen Danbey

Q & A PHOTOGRAPHY: Victoria Upton

Special thanks to: Sega for the party and Mark for goodies. Alison for Wild 9's stuff so prompt and so sexy.

EDITORIAL HQ: EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU
CRIMESTOPPERS: 0171-972 6700
FAX: 0171-972 6701
PRINTING BY: Cooper Clegg
COLOUR: Sarah-Jane Leavey and Sarah Best
DISTRIBUTION: BBC Frontline
PRINTED IN THE UK

SUBSCRIPTION & BACK ISSUE ENQUIRIES
TOWER PUBLISHING
TOWER HOUSE
SOVEREIGN PARK
LATHKILL ST
MARKET HARBORO
LEICESTER
LE16 9ET
TEL: 01858-468888



SUBSCRIPTION RATES (12 ISSUES INC P&P)
United Kingdom and BFPO: £30.00
Overseas Surface Mail: £36.00
Airmail Europe and Eire: £42.00
Airmail Zones 1 & 2: £66.00
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Back issues UK: £3.50 each
Back issues, rest of world: £4.99 each

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COMPETITON RULES
And another thing... Employees, their families and suppliers of EMAP Images are not eligible for entry in competitions. There is no cash alternative to the prizes offered. The Editor's decision is final. No dice, fatboy.

MEAN MACHINES uses Dolby Surround Sound equipment to test all featured software.

And now we go to bed.

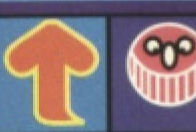


NEWS

THE SHOW GOES ON

ECTS (European Computer Trade Show) is the games industry's traditional bunfight, held twice a year in April and September. Show reports in MEAN MACHINES are an almost as ingrained ritual, with the best and worst on show up for inspection. This ECTS at London's Olympia was clearly the biggest yet, spilling into a new hall, but it certainly wasn't the most exciting, with most of the good stuff on show being titles MEAN MACHINES has covered for release this Christmas. Also traditional is 'lies, damned lies and release schedules'. Many companies are prone to making outrageous claims about the number of games they'll have out within the next two 'quarters' and this show is no exception, with plenty of sheepish explanations for the non-arrival of games we were promised yonks ago. Still this is ECTS.

SONIC IS DEAD! LONG LIVE SONIC!



SONIC ???

BY SONIC TEAM

SATURN

RELEASE 1997

ORIGIN: JAPAN

Sonic X-treme is, as Michael Jackson would put it, His-tory. Sega have 'suspended' the project indefinitely, which should see a release, as our insider put it, when Hell freezes over. The official explanations are vague and on the lines of assessing the game within the context of Sega's other software coming up for release, but it has been an open secret since E3 that some influential people in Japan were unhappy with the project, saying it failed to capture the spirit of the previous Megadrive titles. Yuji Naka, sonic's creator and the producer of NiGHTS, could hardly be made to speak well of it in interviews, and he may have had a hand in the decision to 'can' the project.





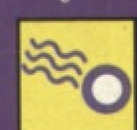
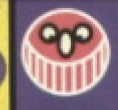
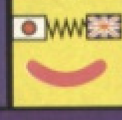
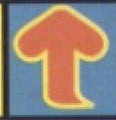
But even as one Sonic kicks it, another rises from the ashes and almost at the same time Sega announce that the Megadrive title, reviewed in this issue as Sonic 3D, will be converted to Saturn and, blimey, will be out before Christmas! A list of upgrade features include polygonal Sonic, texture-mapped environments, 'climate' features, new bonus stages and 'red book' audio (ie the music's on CD) were announced to go with it.

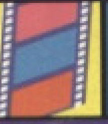
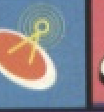
If this doesn't sound like the Sonic title to inspire you then, 'ecky thump, ANOTHER Sonic game started appearing on the Net just days after that! This is a separate project to Sonic 3D, with the direct involvement of Yuji Naka, and rumoured to use a 3D engine similar to NiGHTS. Sega have confirmed the game exists and slate it for a 1997 release, with the intention it squares up to the best Playstation and N64 software out then. So farewell, Sonic X-Treme, but in all honestly, good riddance too.



MEAN MACHINES' newshounds have cast their net far and wide this month for news and gossip from Britain's foremost coders and Japan's celebrity arcade developers. Sports, RPGs, big naff-off coin-op machines: all here.

KEY


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new game

japan news

tipped for the top

exclusive news

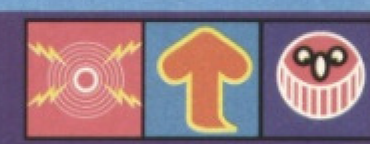
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british development




CALL OF THE WILD



WILD 9

BY SHINY

SATURN

RELEASE APRIL '97

ORIGIN: USA

The creative team behind Earthworm Jim are back! Shiny Entertainment have begun to release details of Wild 9, their first original Saturn title, which is scheduled for release in Spring next year. Wild 9 is an entirely new development, all-new characters and scenario and a custom game engine which is allowing Shiny to create a complete 3-D world for their mad platformer.

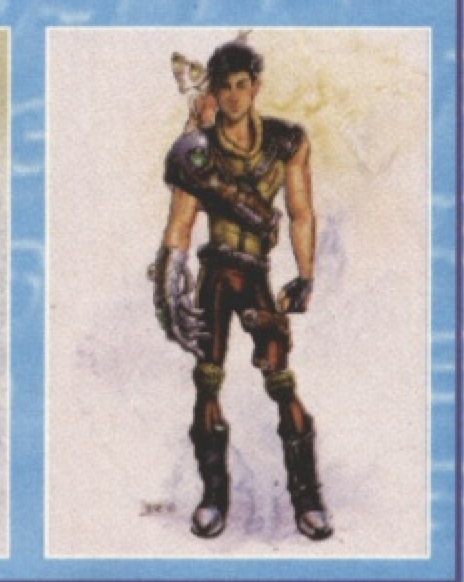
The central character is Wex, a young space dude who crash lands in a distant solar system. Wex's nemesis is Karn, a vast face of evil the size of two football pitches which hangs suspended from the roof of a monstrous palace at the other end of the galaxy. Wex has to travel across nine stages to confront Karn, joining forces with eight other space rangers who make up the Wild 9 team. These characters currently exist as vivid illustrations drawn by Shiny's graphic artists.

The game also boasts, 'the most powerful weapon ever seen in a console game', an innovative device Wex discovers called the 'rig'. This takes the form of a power glove and winding snake attachment, that winds itself around Wex in rather unsettling fashion. The rig is designed as a flexible piece of weaponry that will reveal the true extent of its power as the player becomes more adept. At the moment, we are aware of a creature who dwells inside it known as Bangus, who becomes an ally for Wex throughout the adventure.

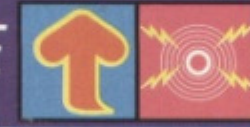
Graphically, the game is in the earliest imaginable stage, with Shiny saying all the work to date has gone on creating a startling new game engine, that displays a platform environment in true 3D and will enable the game to store 60,000 separate animations! (Jim 2, by comparison, used just 3,000). The brief video demonstration of what Wild 9 should be capable of was more than a little titillating, and should give certain other platform game programmers something to chew on.

Wild 9's team claim the game will have all the humour and playability of the Jim games, while exploiting the 32-bit hardware to the full and using the capacity offered by CD. Shiny also received loads of compliments for its other title, MDK, which is currently being programmed for PC CD.





GRANDIOSE



GRANDIA

BY GAME ARTS

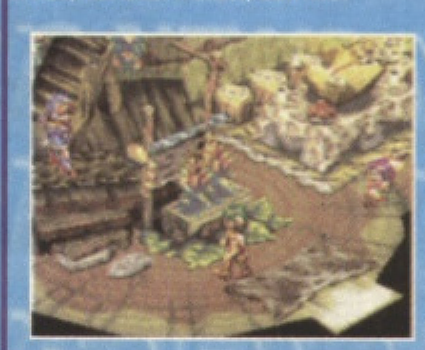
SATURN

RELEASE 1997

ORIGIN: JAPAN



Described as the 'second-biggest pull of the Tokyo Game Show' (remember VF3 was there), Grandia is an RPG that's getting attention in a country where you get an RPG in your cornflakes every morning. But Grandia has been three years in development and, unusually for an RPG, looks the dog's Bs. Game Arts are coordinating this massive project, with the game consisting of, yoiks, several hundred render locations. Unlike other RPGs, these are displayed in true 3D — everything in the game is polygonal, so the player can zoom in to an extraordinary level of close-up detail, or play the game from a bird's eye view with an entire town miniaturised. The Japanese are going ape over Grandia and can hardly wait until next year for it. Nor, for that matter, can we.





OHH! ME TACKLE



JONAH LOMU RUGBY

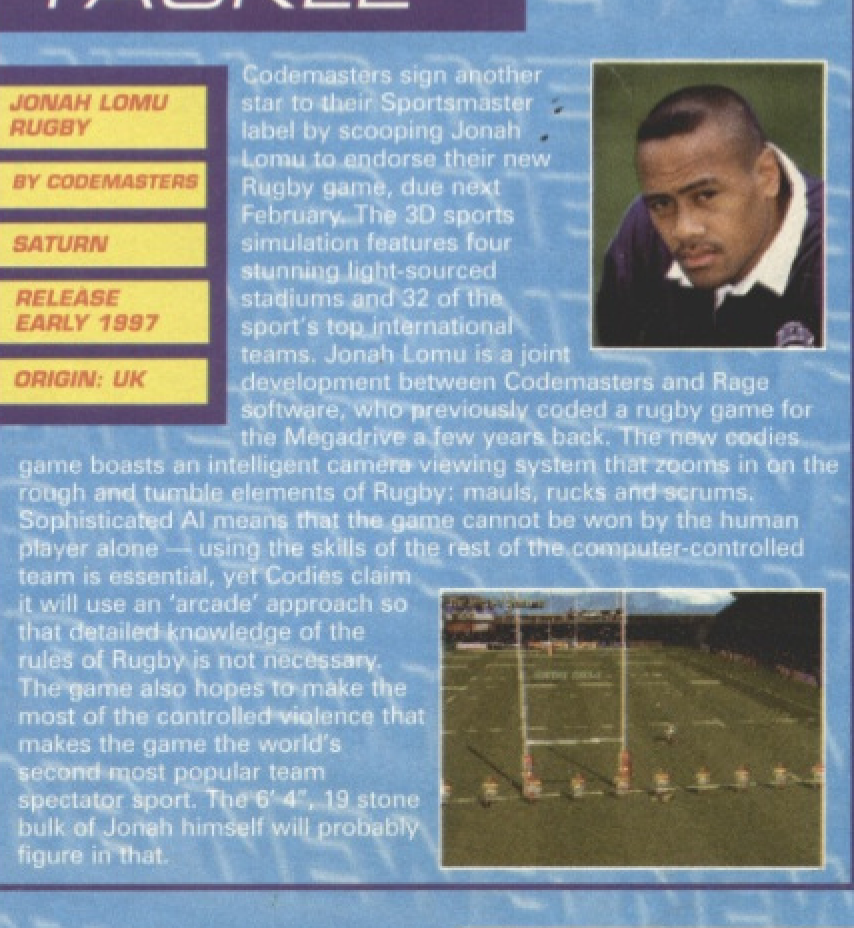
BY CODEMASTERS

SATURN

RELEASE EARLY 1997

ORIGIN: UK

Codemasters sign another star to their Sportsmaster label by scooping Jonah Lomu to endorse their new Rugby game, due next February. The 3D sports simulation features four stunning light-sourced stadiums and 32 of the sport's top international teams. Jonah Lomu is a joint development between Codemasters and Rage software, who previously coded a rugby game for the Megadrive a few years back. The new codies game boasts an intelligent camera viewing system that zooms in on the rough and tumble elements of Rugby: mauls, rucks and scrums. Sophisticated AI means that the game cannot be won by the human player alone — using the skills of the rest of the computer-controlled team is essential, yet Codies claim it will use an 'arcade' approach so that detailed knowledge of the rules of Rugby is not necessary. The game also hopes to make the most of the controlled violence that makes the game the world's second most popular team spectator sport. The 6' 4", 19 stone bulk of Jonah himself will probably figure in that.



LET'S PLAY BALL

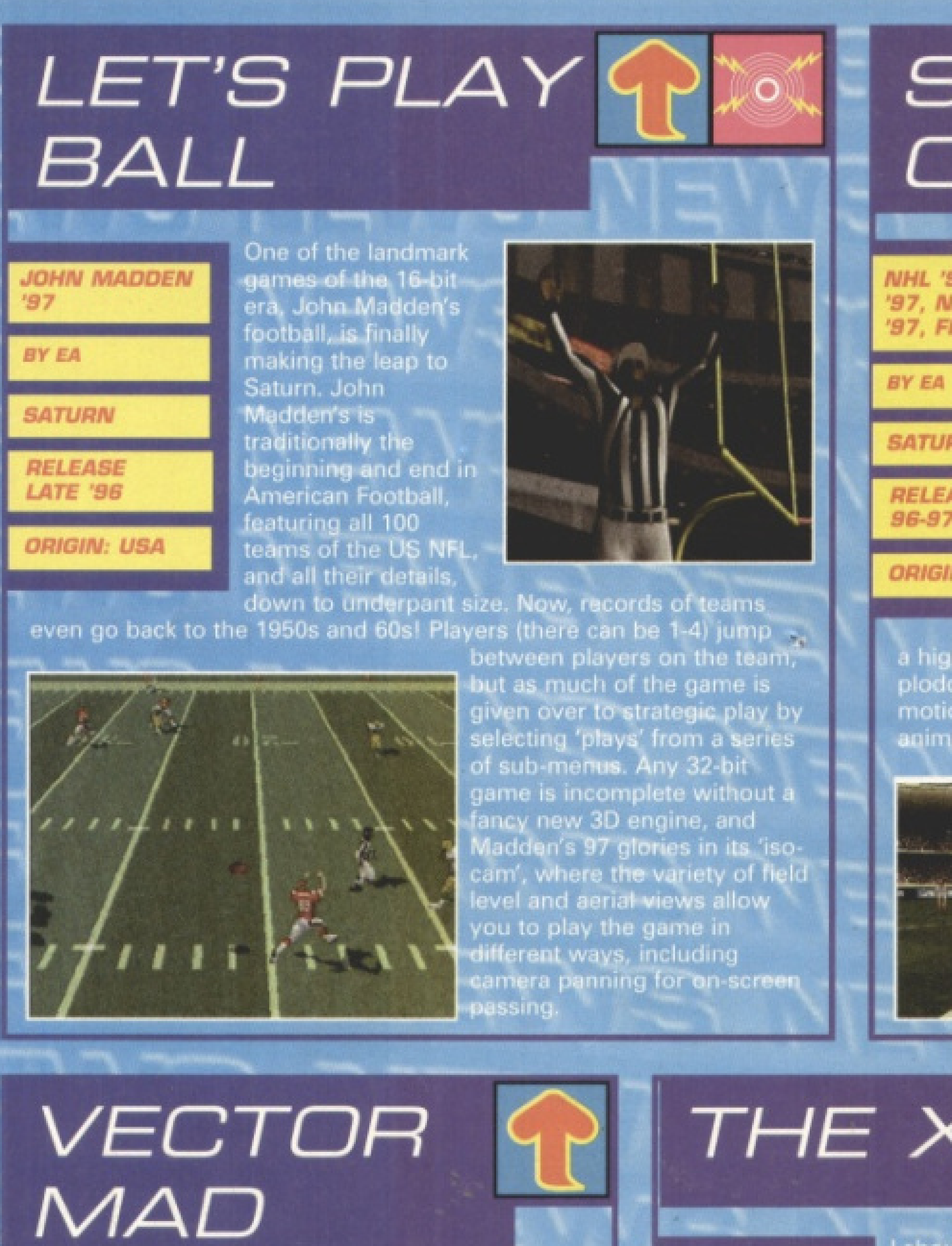
JOHN MADDEN '97

BY EA

SATURN

RELEASE LATE '96

ORIGIN: USA



One of the landmark games of the 16-bit era, John Madden's football, is finally making the leap to Saturn. John Madden's is traditionally the beginning and end in American Football, featuring all 100 teams of the US NFL, and all their details, down to underpant size. Now, records of teams even go back to the 1950s and 60s! Players (there can be 1-4) jump between players on the team, but as much of the game is given over to strategic play by selecting 'plays' from a series of sub-menus. Any 32-bit game is incomplete without a fancy new 3D engine, and Madden's 97 glories in its 'iso-cam', where the variety of field level and aerial views allow you to play the game in different ways, including camera panning for on-screen passing.

SPORT IT OUT

NHL '97, PGA '97, NBA LIVE '97, FIFA '97

BY EA

SATURN

RELEASE 96-97

ORIGIN: USA

EA Sports — once great, now aiming to be a force in games once again with a raft of annual updates of their classic sports licenses. All of these, Fifa '97 apart, are first timers on the Saturn, since EA sat out last christmas. Fifa will undoubtedly be the main attraction (both Fifa '96 and Fifa '95 sold more than any other UK title last year. The main aim has been to improve the 3D engine, animation and player AI, all of which came in for some stick last year. Other new features are team and player attributes (Vinnie Jones will behave accordingly); 5-aside indoor tournies, and a high-speed game option to finally dispense with Fifa's reputation for plodding gameplay. Other titles utilise the same level of detail and motion captured player animations.





VECTOR MAD

TEMPEST 2000

BY INTERPLAY

SATURN

RELEASE DECEMBER

ORIGIN: UK

15 years ago, Atari made the best coin-ops. Tempest is one classic, largely forgotten until hippy programming genius Jeff Minter created an update for Atari's piss-poor Jaguar system last year, which proved to be the only worthwhile game on the machine. Now that game is due for a surprise conversion onto Saturn. Tempest is set on an infinite collection of 3D webs, with the player controlling a tiny polygonal craft riding it at the near end. Enemies advance from the far end, and the game's simple aim is to blast them before they make it. Graphically the game is minimalist, but captures the coolness of the coin-op with its mesmeric, compulsive blasting action. If the conversion is halfway decent, this should be a compulsory crimble purchase for serious gamesplayers.



THE X-FILE

X2

BY TEAM 17

SATURN

RELEASE DECEMBER

ORIGIN: UK

Labour-voting programmers to a man, Team 17 are producing X2, a homage to the type of blaster striking miners must have killed time on during't Pit Strike against Maggie Thatcher. It's a 32-bit, bells and whistles (or should that be whippets?) sequel to Project X, Team 17's blaster on the Amiga (ugh!). Vertical and horizontal stages, ceaseless action, fancy power-ups, huge bosses. Should give Darius 2 a good rogering.









LESSON IN MARKETING NO. 1

You are the PR guy for a company making joypads. You want the mags to print a picture of your new pad. But MEAN MACHINES don't like printing joypad pictures. You dream up a cunning plan. Flatter the mag's editor by taking a picture of the joypad and the mag, then write a little personal press release. Ploy works: The Tecnoplus Megadrive pad is only £9.99, has six buttons and auto-fire mode. Buy it kids!

JUNIOR KICKSTART



INTERNATIONAL MOTO

BY TIME WARNER

SATURN

RELEASE EARLY 1996

ORIGIN: USA

Time Warner add to their backlog of unreleased Saturn titles with a motocross game. The intercontinetal pretext of the game comes from having 30 separate muddy circuits set across the globe. If that were not enough, it's the first Saturn racer to feature a track editor so players can muck up their own tracks 'in seconds'. The split-screen bike-based bash is being constructed by Graftgold, a respected team of brit developers who made their name in the 80s.



LUNATIC FRINGE

BEDLAM

BY GTI

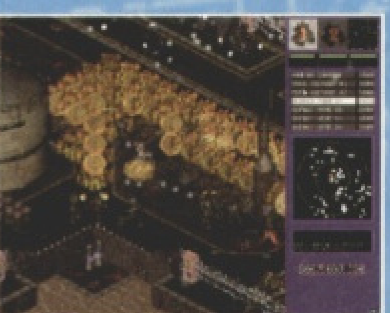
SATURN

RELEASE NOVEMBER

ORIGIN: UK



Bedlam offers strategy and action in equal measure in an isometric adventure that should grab the attention of any Syndicate fans. Programmed by Mirage (creators of the infamous Rise of the Robots duology), Bedlam is wrapped in a rather clichéd plot idea, based on machines taking over the earth and some remaining survivors (in this case merceneries) out to reclaim the planet. The idea is perked up by the totally destructive nature of the game: thousands of enemies and five highly inflammable environments: and the fact you can play tactics by controlling three separate operatives simultaneously. Two years of work will culminate in our review, like next ish!



EAT OUR SHORTS

SEGA ADS
Sega have four TV ads planned pre-christmas. The NiGHTS and Worldwide Soccer ad are already airing, and will be followed by two more 'arcade conversion' teasers.

CLASSIFIED
GT are releasing Williams' arcade conversion Area 51, to be compatible with the Virtua Gun. It uses rendered sequences depicting an alien infestation of the infamous secret base, supposed site of the 'Rockwell Incident'.

VIPERS BUG
Sega Japan are recalling all copies of Fighting Vipers, released at the beginning of September, because of a bug. Owners of the import version will probably have experienced the inexplicable memory-wiping error that occurs. We advise you to wait for a bug-free PAL version.

IRON WILL
Acclaim's next big game is Iron and Blood, a 3D polygon beat 'em up featuring fantasy characters straight out of Dungeons and Dragons. Acclaim boasts that it outperforms both VF2 and Tekken technically.

GOING BALLISTIC
Team 17 plan to add another pinball game to the Saturn's burgeoning collection with Ballistic. Four tables, ultra-realism and novel themes are all promised by the Manchesterford firm.

BREAKING POINT
There's a niche for a really good tennis game on Satun and Ocean are aiming to fill it with Breakpoint, a sports sim using motion captured players and commentary supplied by Chris Bailey, who does BBC Wimbledon apparently. Review soon.

NEW WORLD
Segaworld in the Trocadero is open, and MEAN MACHINES sampled it last month at a party thrown by Sega. There are six interactive rides, but more importantly, three Virtua Fighter 3 cabinets — the first in the UK.

GOSSIP

It's not Streets of Rage 3, but the new Core fighting game is looking awesome in any case. It mixes the coolness of a Virtua Fighter-style game with the freedom of movement associated with scrolling beat 'em ups. There are already some spectacular sequences with cars careening into car parks and hoodlums spilling out. Core's other fighter, Ninja is looking equally good, with a spider nest level showing off the silky smooth 3D and excellent animation. Sega have picked up Amok and Scorcher, the long-awaited Scavenger titles look as if they might just have been worth it. Whether Heart of Darkness will be is another matter — the project has been put back again, to Spring '97! They should take a leaf out of powerhouse Probe which is handling Die Hard Trilogy on Saturn — the Fox interactive title is just weeks off completion. We'll also be travelling to Probe this month to see a top secret project, Condemned, for Acclaim. Capcom are working on a Streetfighter vs X-Men arcade game. Fans of Shining in the Darkness from Sonic on Megadrive should be delighted to hear of Shining of the Holy Ark, a 3D RPG due next year. Plus Treasure have 5 titles planned the first being the action strategy Silhouette Mirage.

CONTRA-VERSY

CONTRA

BY KONAMI

SATURN

RELEASE EARLY 1997

ORIGIN: JAPAN

Konami are putting everything into the 32-bit version of Contra, which was a massive hit (AKA Probotector) on the Megadrive and SNES. The new versions are coming on apace and feature the same mad-marines-on-the-rampage action, now viewing shoot em up levels from a whole range of different angles. The graphics are being worked on at the highest level — including the husband and wife team who designed Castlevania's. All the original mad bosses are also included in the new version. We've tied up an exclusive of this for the future.





POLICE HUNT TATTOOED MANIAC
POLICE YESTERDAY LAUNCHED A NATIONWIDE HUNT FOR A MAN THEY DESCRIBED AS 'HIGHLY DANGEROUS'.
The store manager said that the man had been playing Tekken2 on PlayStation, when he suddenly stripped to the waist - revealing his all-over body tattoos - screamed "Heihachi will avenge" before setting about his trail of destruction.
The public have been warned not to approach him.
SOON MY MASTERPIECE WILL BE COMPLETE
THE SUPER-HUMAN PISTON ATTACK HAS LEFT ME WEAK BUT I WILL CONTINUE THE FIGHT - THE QUEST MUST CONTINUE, THE FIGHT GOES ON
PAIN WILL BRING ME CLOSER TO FATHER
Beware Kazuya
鉄拳
FEEL NO PAIN
TEKKEN II HAS SHOWN THE WAY
HEIHACHI WILL AVENGE!
the sins of the son will be visited
HEIHACHI WILL RETURN!
a medal for each victory
I AM THE DEVIL SON KAZUYA
MY BRAVERY WILL BE REWARDED
NO, I'M MORE INTENSE
THE MARK OF THE PISTON
namco
SONY
PlayStation
DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION

CREAM OF SEGA

OFFICIAL CHARTS © ELSPA COMPILED BY CHART TRACK

Absolutely no points for working out what's topped the charts this month. As NiGHTS goes out, Sega think it may be their fastest-selling title ever. A fitting end to Cream of Sega as we know it, as from the next issue it ceases to exist! Don't worry, there will be plenty of chart action incorporated into our extended news section, with info on what's happening in Japan and the arcades, and of course, in your house.

HYPE CHART

We're coming to get you!

1 (4)
FIGHTING VIPERS
These screenshots must be getting to you.

2 (2)
SOVIET STRIKE
You can't wait until November. There's going to be a revolution.

3 (5)
DAYTONA USA CCE
Now the readers' favourite.

4 (-)
VIRTUAL ON
Be excited, be very excited.

5 (-)
TOMB RAICER
A few more weeks and Lara will be in your palms.

KEEP 'EM COMING!

The mailbag for Cream of Sega is getting pretty impressive. But from next month we want you to send your entries to READERS CHARTS at the same address. Same info, mind, and the same chance of winning a prize for your chart prediction. The last Cream of Sega winner is Adam Greaves of Salford.

MY TOP THREE SATURN GAMES ARE:

____
____
____

I'M MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO:

____
____
____

I PREDICT THE MOST POPULAR GAME WILL BE:

____

NAME:
ADDRESS:

Send to: Reader's Chart, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

SALES CHART: SATURN

Chart Track's guide to the best-selling CDs.

1 (-)
NIGHTS(Sega)
The Sonic phenomenon swoops into steal this month's honours.

2 (-)
ALIEN TRILOGY (Acclaim)
The bitch looks more than capable of storming onto the bestseller list.

3 (-)
DESTRUCTION DERBY (Sega)
Too late! You lot didn't wait.

4 (-)
ATHLETE KINGS(Sega)
Another new entry! This is a serious shake up of the chart scene.

5 (-)
BUST A MOVE 2(Acclaim)
It's nice to see playability still stands for something.

6 (-)
DISCWORLD (Psygnosis)
There must have been games starvation about for all these new entries

7 (3)
SEGA RALLY (Sega)
AM3's masterpiece shows signs of slipping at last.

8 (4)
VIRTUA COP (Sega)
Who would thought this would still be Top Ten? Us.

9 (2)
LOADED (Gremlin)
Some people are still discovering this murder-fest for the first time.

10 (-)
FIFA '96(Sega)
Makes a reapperance, just before Fifa '97 makes its!

ELSPA

SALES CHART: MEGADRIVE

Chart Track's guide to 16-bit sales.

1 (9)
BRIAN LARA CRICKET '96 (Codemasters)
Cricket:Megadrive's salvation. Mother.

2 (2)
MICRO MACHINES 2 (Codemasters)
One and two in the chart. Impressive.

3 (4)
WORMS (Sega)
They manage to wriggle up a place on last month's showing.

4 (-)
FIFA '96 (EA)
Last year's biggest seller. But there's always some slowcoach.

5 (6)
SONIC AND KNUCKLES (Sega)
Your best bet until Sonic 3D arrives.

6 (-)
TAZMANIA:ESCAPE FROM MARS (Sega)
Escape from this game, more like.

7 (9)
MEGA BOMBERMAN (Sega)
Now this is a game. Give me this game.

8 (5)
TOY STORY (Sega)
The movie may be a memory, but the game's still frish.

9 (-)
DYNAMITE HEADDY (Sega)
Hurrah! Top ten at last.... after two years.

10 (-)
STREETS OF RAGE 2 (Sega)
These are the cut-price classics y'see. Great value.

ELSPA

OFFICE CHART SATURN

Mother knows best.

1 (-)
NIGHTS INTO DREAMS
It's still our favourite game. And will remain so.

2 (-)
STREETFIGHTER ZERO 2
Class conversion, believe us.

3 (-)
VIRTUAL ON
The tiny taste we've had has left us hungry for more.

4 (1)
FIGHTING VIPERS
Great. Apart from the bug that wipes your memory (import only).

5 (-)
BLAM:MACHINEHEAD
More than a pair of moist Y-fronts. Blam is one mean mother of a game.

READERS CHART SATURN

Free-thinking individuals.

1 (2)
SEGA RALLY
Firmly established as your fave.

2 (2)
VIRTUA FIGHTER 2
You love the gang, you f'in love 'em.

3 (3)
PANZER DRAGOON ZWEI
Once again, Panzer getting the credit it deserves.

4 (-)
ATHLETE KINGS
You played it, you loved it.

5 (-)
ULTIMATE MK3
The conversion went down well then, sir?

JAMMA HO

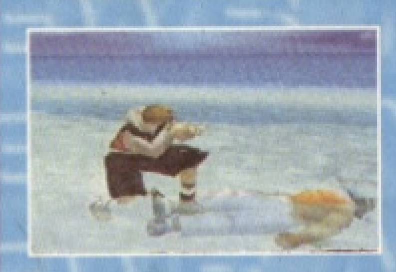
Tokyo's JAMMA Show (Japanese Arcade Manufacturers) is the world's most prestigious trade event for new coin-ops. As arcade technology again pulls away from the level available in the home, it also represents the pinnacle of video game-tech. Our thanks to Warren Harrod, our man in Japan, for the materials that go with this report.

PICK 1
VIRTUA FIGHTER 3

Finished versions of Sega's flagship game of 1996 are now available to you, at least if you live in London. Surprisingly, Europe has scored ahead of the US, where VF3 is expected to be delayed until October. The presence of this awesome game dominated the show, as visitors got to grips with the two incredible new characters and witnessed some of the effects the Model 3 board is capable of. We'll have a full VF3 feature and arcade player's guide next issue.



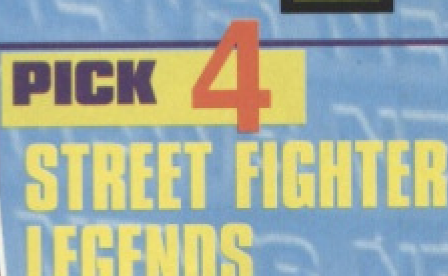






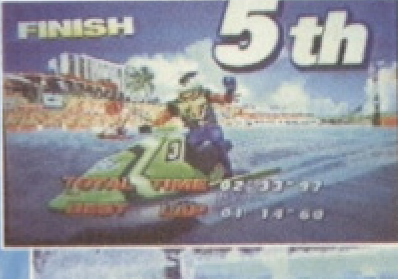
PICK 4
STREET FIGHTER LEGENDS

Capcom have produced the first '3D Streetfighter' game in a fashion different to what most would have expected. There are only eight characters — and only four of these (Chun Li, Zangief, Ryu and Ken) come from the Streetfighter series. Streetfighter Legend (the title remains provisional) also uses a 3-Deformation graphics system to give its chunky polygon players depth. Features from the Zero games like Super Combos and finishes are there.



PICK 3
WAVE RUNNER

Jetski games have suddenly become all the rage, with this, Namco's Aqua Jet and Nintendo's Wave Racer for N64. Sega's entrant is easily the most impressive rendition of the sport, with sumptious Carribean backgrounds and characters as detailed in polygons as any previous Sega racing vehicle. Courses are constructed from tidal water areas running into lagoons and rivers. Ramps are placed around the course which players can use to perform aerial stunts for extra points. Sega's full cabinet uses a sit-down ski vehicle, whereas players of Namco's Aqua Jet stand.





PICK 2
GTI CLUB:COTE D'AZUR RACER

Konami is now determined to match Sega and Namco in arcade technology with a racing game that matches Model 2 spec, and there's a dynamite game concept in there too. GTI Club is best described as 'The Italian Job' made into a game. None the wiser? The name comes from a Michael Caine film from the Sixties where a gang of robbers run riot round an Italian city in Mini Coopers. That's exactly what's on offer in GTI Club, as your turbo-charged mini sends pedestrians diving and pavement cafe tables flying, before veering off the road and heading down stone steps. Hugely original and awesome to behold.





MMA OT!



PICK 5
KONAMI 3DCG

Konami demonstrated their new 3D arcade board with a demo of a fighting game squarely in the VF3 mode, and its amazing power looks like rivalling Sega's, on paper at least. Konami 3DCG matches Model 3's 1 million polygons per second, hi-resolution and custom graphics effects. The demo showed fully modelled 3D fighting arenas, with changing climate effects ranging from lightning to rain – in realtime!



PICK 6
SEGA TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

The next ball-buster in Sega Model 2 racing is a bit of Daytona, a bit of Sega Rally, and will probably create a vogue for a new kind of arcade racer. The featured vehicles are custom high-performance cars, the tracks racing layouts of Indy style, the graphics smoother than anything else seen on Model 2. Although the level of detail may not impress more than Sega Rally, the frame rate is exceptional.





PICK 7
X-MEN VS STREETFIGHTER

Only weeks after the first Net rumours — playable versions of the mad (some would say ludicrously mismatched) beat 'em up. XVSSF utilises Capcom's new board to animate monstrous sized X-Men enemies against Capcom's own cartoon super heroes. Playing a game that pits close combat fighting against flashy fantasy moves can only be described as weird, but it's done with Capcom style.





DEAD OR ALIVE

Tecmo are using Model 2 tech to produce their very VF2 beat 'em up. Not any more impressive than the E3 version, which was not very impressive.

GRADIUS 3D

Konami update their old scrolling space shooter series, Gradius, by putting it in polygon 3D. Looked earlier and shakier than their other efforts.

SEGA SUPER G

Sega's first stab at a ski-ing game (probably goaded on by Namco's Alpine Racer 1&2). The game is gutsier and classier than either of those, with incredibly fast update and a better independent ski control system, so true parallel and snow-ploughing is possible.

PUZZLE BOBBLE 3

The predictable return of the itchingly addictive Bust-a-Move series was actually Taito's high point — their Fighting Vipers wannabe, Fighter's Impact, looked distinctly shaky, and completely unoriginal.

SUPER TAG BATTLE

SNK show no sign of stemming the flow of Neo Geo 2-D Fighters. Tag Battle is just the latest in a line from King of Fighters to Samurai Shodown and Real Bout. And the JAMMA crowd continue to lap them up.

DANCING EYES

There's always one piece of Japanese mischief-making to apologise for. This year it's a puzzle game that's a take on the hoary old 'painter' game, Amidar. A selection of Arabian princesses are trapped in various bottles and jars, and you have to release them by surrounding the segments. They'll reward you with a fully textured-mapped light-sourced belly dance!





PROJECT	VIRTUAL ON
PUBLISHER	SEGA
INITIATED	EARLY '96
RELEASE	LATE '96
FORMAT	SATURN
DEVELOPERS	AM3

The most successful coin-op of 1996 in Japan: Virtual On Cyber Troopers takes gladitorial combat to a battlefield beyond the stars.

It's good when it's one-on-one. Gaming that is. Head to head gaming is as old as the hills, well as old as Atari Combat, the charming cartridge that came with the VCS. Virtual On is basically an update of the old concept of lining up your tank and taking your best shot. Now, natch, it's huge robot against huge robot with the latest armoury of guided missiles and smart bombs with eye-popping kaleidoscopic explosions.

JAPS ARE MAD FOR IT

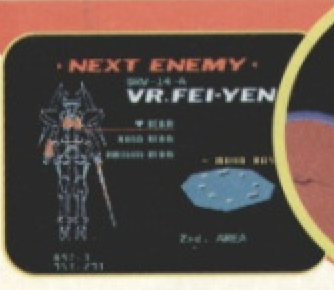
The conversion of AM3's arcade Virtual On is of massive interest to the Japanese. In early '96 it was King of the arcades there, and player's guides and speculation on the Saturn version have rarely been out of the Japanese mags. The Brits may catch on belatedly, purely on the basis of the quality of the conversion, which is shaping up to be pretty awesome. Echoing many of the games in the Virtua series, players are given a choice of distinct character robots, each with custom weapons and styling. These range from a shapely 'lady' VR. Fei Yen with a heart-shaped 'love beam', to the lumbering Bel Bas Bow which dispenses most woe at close range with its huge hydraulic arms.



TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT

The game scenario is simple. Two robots face each other in a square arena, with a few blocks offering limited cover. There's complete freedom to move around, and movement is high speed. The aim is to ambush your opponent from the best vantage point, discharging your weapons, sidestepping his retaliation. Your three main attacks work differently at very close range, or from the air, which is a real position of strength. Weapons need to charge between uses, adding an element of restraint and strategy to the proceedings. Special moves, performed by joystick dexterics are the preserve of the seasoned player.







THE 'BORGS

Eight robots for you to take into the fray. The game's cutscreens depict them as gargantuan, served by a battalion of tiny human technicians.

MBV-04-G TEMJIN

The all-rounder Virtual Roid, with the benefit of speed, good armour and a respectable complement of weapons. Almost the 'Ryu' or 'Akira' of Virtual On.
WEAPONS: Rifle * Beam Sword * Bomb





HBV-05-E RAIDEN

The VR with the single most powerful weapon: Raiden's laser. He also has the advantage of the best armour. Maneurvreability is his weakness.
WEAPONS: Bazooka * Ground Bomb * Laser





TRV-06N-H VIPER II

Structurally, Viper II is a lighter, less armoured vesion of the Temjin 'Roid. Consequently, jumping height and dash speed are much enhanced. It also has one of the best all-round weapons complements.
WEAPONS:Vulcan * 7-way missile * Homing Beam



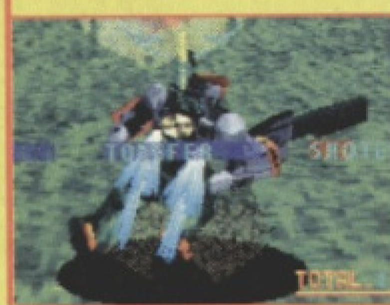


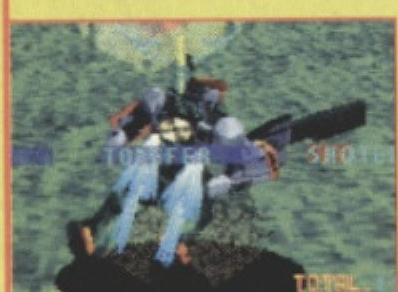
HBV-10-B DORKAS

A scaled-down version of the Raiden robot, but with its own advantages, including the penetrating Phalanx attack and a usefulness at close range combat.
WEAPONS: Fireball * Hammer * Phalanx

MBV-08-C APHARMD

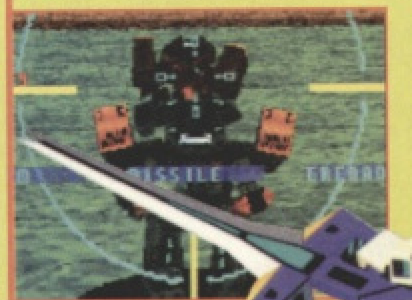
Temjin again provides the structural model, though Apharmd is a speed-boosted model, and armed with an unparalleled close-range sword weapon: the Tongfer. Getting any joy from Apharmd's other weapons requires excellent aiming.
WEAPONS: Shotgun * Bomb * Tongfer





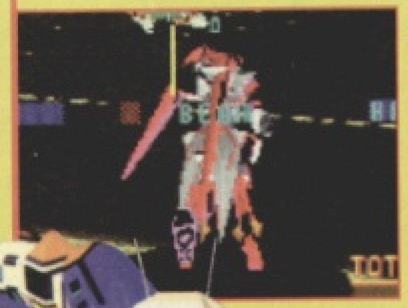
SAV-07-D BELGDOR

Raiden, again without the high-level of armour, but increased mobility. Belgdor's homing missile, most effective from the air, is a significant factor in long-range battles, but it's high mounting leads to stability problems!
WEAPONS: Grenade * Napalm * Homing Missile



GRV-14-A FEI-YEN

The inevitable 'lady robo' Fei Yen is predictably lighter, weaker and more shapely than the other VRs, but noticeably more agile. She also features a unique Hyper mode activated when her energy falls below half — her attacks become twice as powerful.
WEAPONS:Hand Beam * Bowgun * Heart Beam



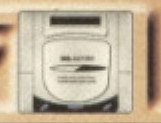
XBV-13-III BAL-BAS-BOW

Built differently to all others, Bal-Bas-Bow uses a levitational movement system and as such is a struggle to control. Ordnance is weak, but homes in effectively on opponents. The VR is vulnerable at close range and the runt of the VO litter.
WEAPONS: Ring Laser * Floating Mines * Hand Bit











PICK UP STICKS



An interesting facet of the conversion has been handling the arcade's distinctive double joystick controls. The elaborate coin-op cabinet has two analogue sticks for full maneouvreability. Firstly, the joypad controls have been sensibly arranged and are more than adequate, although the use of every button makes it a demanding game to play. But purists will be heartened by the special joystick designed by AM3, which emulates the coin-op method, and will be available as a game and controller pack. After NiGHTS, this seems to becoming something of a fashion.





SPLIT PERSONALITIES

Two-player action is integral to Virtual On, and this is recognised in the able split-screen mode, which looks like maintaining the standard of the single-player game in terms of speed and playability. There are other plans afoot for interaction, though. The first of these is a link-up mode using that elusive cable. Later, a network version should become available through the modem-based Netlink system, due in the early new year.





WORK IN PROGRESS



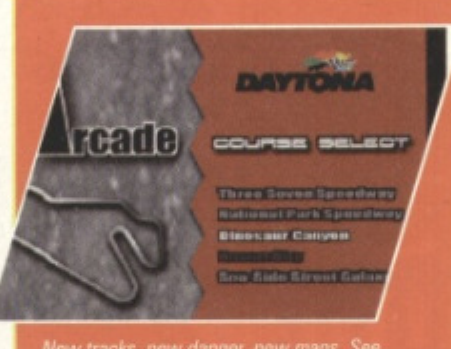
Never has so much crap been said about a conversion as has been said about AM2's Saturn conversion of Daytona USA. For just about every bit of praise the game received, there was a moan: "it was only one-player", "the clipping was bad", "there were only three tracks", "the music was naff".

MEAN MACHINES was not amongst the detractors. The game scored 94% and, while the shortcomings were dutifully brought to your attention, we never lost sight of the fact that AM2 produced an excellent piece of gameplay. As for the main argument, that the backgrounds popped-up in an ugly fashion, fair comment. But that's not a weakness of Saturn, it's down to the wide-view and open space that are part of Daytona. You can make a racing game that cleverly disguises that with tunnels and lots of sharp bends, but the whole point of Daytona is the open road.

Nevertheless, Sega, particularly Sega Europe did not want to leave it at that. Hence Daytona USA Championship Circuit Edition. A mouthful of a title, so you'l forgive us if we just call it Daytona CCE from now on.

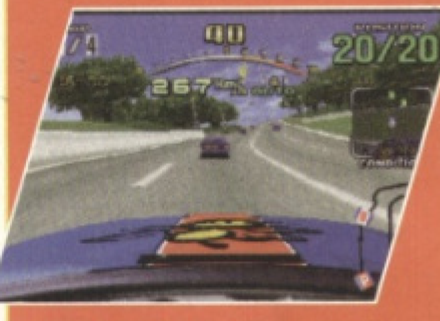
Daytona CCE's team (drawn partly from the Sega Rally convertors) has taken these complaints on board and produced an update that brings new tracks, smarter graphics and a two-player split-screen mode. The game will also have in-built compatibility with the forthcoming Netlink device, which will eventually provide multi-player network gaming for Saturn. You'll have it all before Christmas.

DAYTO

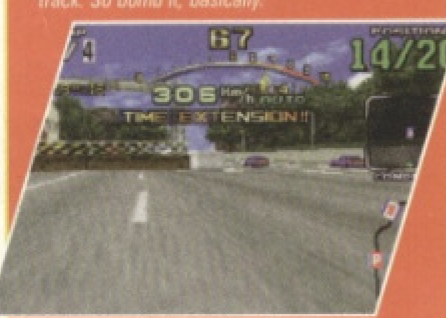




New tracks, new danger, new maps. See the Desert City track is not yet available.



This is national park speedway. It's only slightly more complex than the 777 'Indy' track. So bomb it, basically.



A LA MODE

The new Daytona filches a lot of the excellent options from Sega Rally, including the ghost modes, which allow you to race against a car which represents your best time trial times.



POP UP STORY

Daytona CCE's team are working on reducing the occasions that large chunks of scenery graphics suddenly appear in the foreground. This is still an ongoing process but they have had some success so far, with elements like the sailing ship on the Sega Galaxy track that once used to appear like the Marie Celeste!



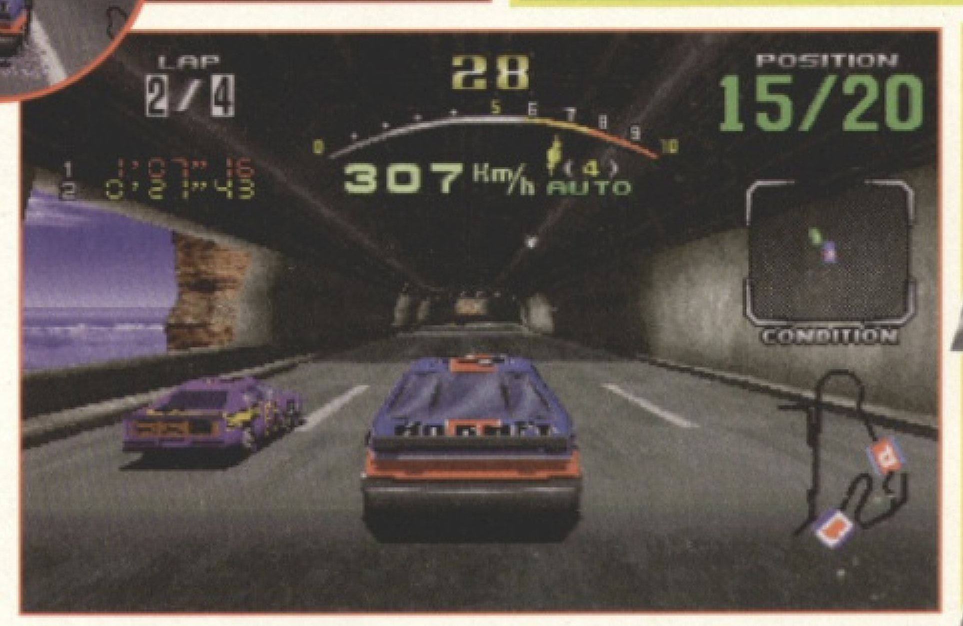


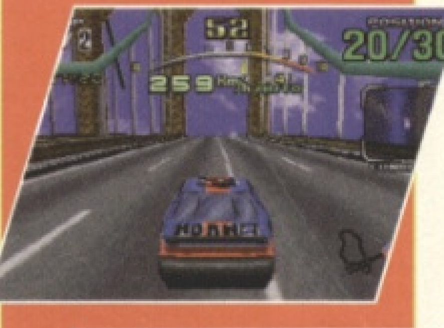
It's almost 18 months since AM2 released Daytona USA in Japan. Time to give the old slapper a scrub-up.

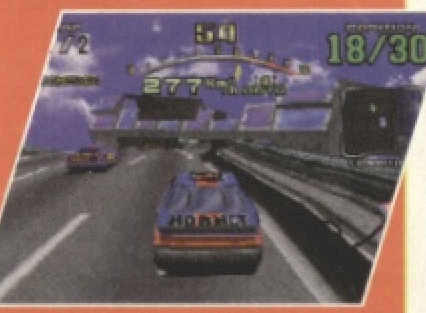
FAIRGROUND ATTRACTION



One of the two new tracks is operational. It's set alongside a Theme Park with a huge Ferris Wheel and rollercoaster providing trackside scenery. There's also a nasty chicane which provides a point for potential pile-ups. This track seems slotted between the easy Speedway track and moderately difficult dinosaur track in terms of challenge.







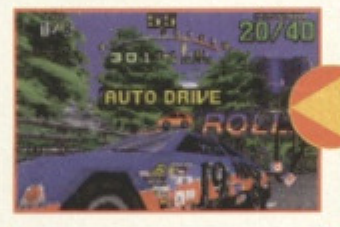
The work on the old tracks is cosmetic at heart.



Dinosaur Valley still has the open-air Little Chef services offering Jubilee pancakes.

ROLLING REMIX

Re-using Daytona's distinctively cheesy music was not an option, and just to make sure we don't get another dose of the J-pops, Sega UK are handling that task themselves with their in-house musician. Don't despair, fromage-friends, as he's remixed the original tunes as dance tracks, also enlisting the services of a girl from Sega's Accounts department who can sing a bit, who does the classic 'Daytona, let's go away'. She is, in fact, silky smooth! There's also new house and drum-and-bass tracks for the new circuits.





MAKEOVER

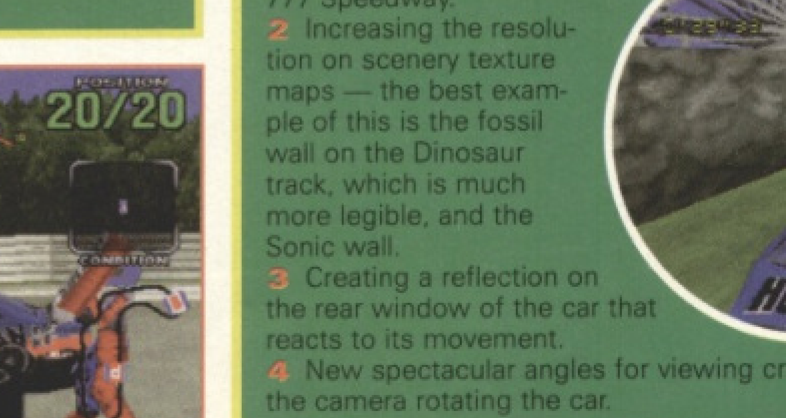
Work has gone into lots of little cosmetic improvements which Daytona fans should notice. These include:

1 Adding a transparent glass screen around the stands on 777 Speedway.
2 Increasing the resolution on scenery texture maps — the best example of this is the fossil wall on the Dinosaur track, which is much more legible, and the Sonic wall.
3 Creating a reflection on the rear window of the car that reacts to its movement.
4 New spectacular angles for viewing crashes, with the camera rotating the car.

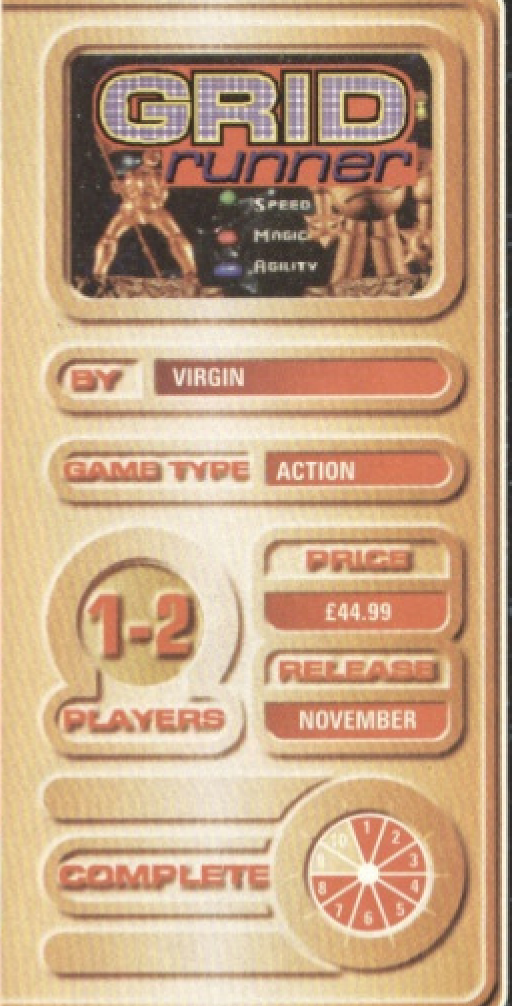
COMING NEXT

We can understand if you're still not sure if you want a Daytona CCE alongside your battered box for Daytona USA. Next month you will know as we review it.





GRID runner



'Futuresport' first emerged as a concept in the sixties, and provided lots of opportunity for 70s movies to dress actors up in Kit Kat wrappers and trundle around steel-floored arenas on roller-skates. How we laughed when said concepts were predicted to replace football and cricket. But someone must have been inspired — we've got Gladiators. Sharron Davies is the future!

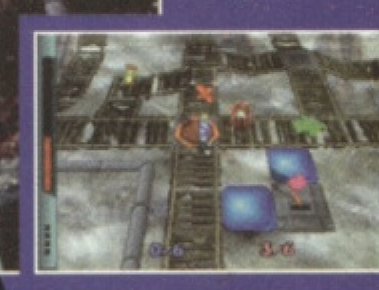
Virgin does not have the world's 38th sexiest woman (according to FHM) to front its new highly technical futuresport puzzler. It has you and a mate, in a game of intergalactic tig. Grid Runner's 60 zones work on a single simple precept, but get gradually more complicated by the environment and the increasing cunning of your deviant opposition.

AARON SPELLING

Players augment their natural abilities with supernatural ones. There are a range of spells employed including teleportation (useful) and creating bridges (very useful) as well as offensive weapons that slow your opponent. These powers drain your magic reserves, which must be replenished on a trolley-dash-ing bonus maze.

JOHNNY NO MATES

You may have figured that Grid Runner is designed for two players. And indeed, the game accomodates them both with a split-screen window mode. But people shunned because they were once found to have skids, will be delighted with the range of computer characters (space monster types) who have defined characters and remarkably sneaky Artificial Intelligence.



GRIDDLED

Grid Runner is a series of suspended mazes, starting as simple affairs and growing into multi-screen labyrinths. The landscape is laid out in square tiles, with bridges, teleporters, barriers and speed ups as features dotted around the layouts. The key elements are the flags, which each player is trying to possess.



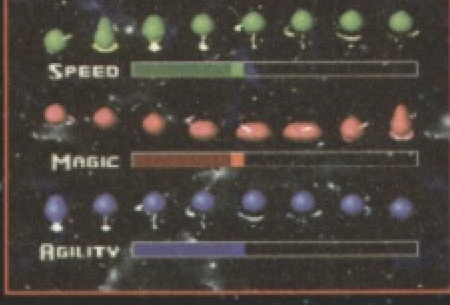


CHASE ME! CHASE ME!

Grid Runner is one-on-one tag. On each round, the competitors are set a target of flags to possess. This is done by simply touching it, changing its colour. However, one of the players is always 'IT'. The 'IT' player cannot change flags, so the other player has, as Henry Kelly would say, 'control of the game'. All the 'IT' player can do is 'infect' his rival by touching him, instantly switching status.















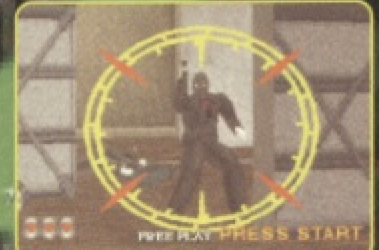





All we wanted for Christmas last year was a copy of Virtua Cop and a pair of juicy Virtua guns to go with it. Don't know about you, but Santa came up with goods, and while the rest of the street were singing Silent Night we were howling 'Don't move mutha!' and 'Who's the man?' at our big-screen TVs.

This year Sega plan to shatter heavenly peace with a follow-up conversion of Virtua Cop 2. A pale remake, a sad update? Nothing could be further from the truth. Even the incomplete disc of Virtua Cop 2 shown by Sega is a Gangsta Paradise which is technically leaps and bounds beyond the previous version. Best polish that badge – those guns are coming out of retirement.





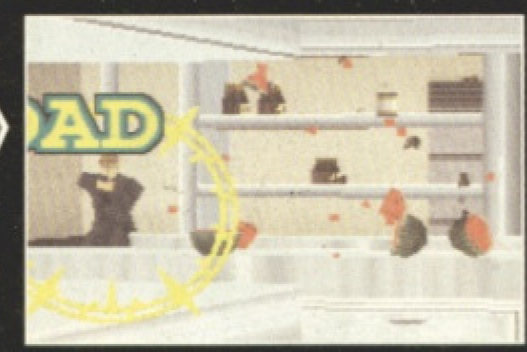
HOMICIDE – LIFE ON THE STREETS

There are far more enemy targets in Virtua Cop 2, making it much harder to 'map' the game into a predictable duck shoot. Remember the slow opening to Act 1 of the docks? No more gentle introduction in Virtua Cop 2, which kicks in with a jewellery heist in progress. A larger variety of baddies appear – Tarantino types, axe-wielding musclemen, Uzi-toting thugs in balaclavas and wise guys in the first level alone. A real challenge is set by the 'ones who get away', baddies who cross your field of vision for a couple of seconds before making off.



WEAR AND TEAR

AM2 took note of Virtua Cop fans love of shooting up the scenery, and there's tons more of it in Cop 2. Many of the objects lying around can be wasted accidentally, or on purpose if you're prepared to take some damage by ignoring the armed targets. The cruise liner of level two is particularly rich in perishable goods – Champagne bottles stacked in the bar and a row of ripe watermelons lined up in the kitchen are just two highlights.







Gangland boss Ronnie 'Truck Tosser' Scarface tries it on. Sort 'im out.



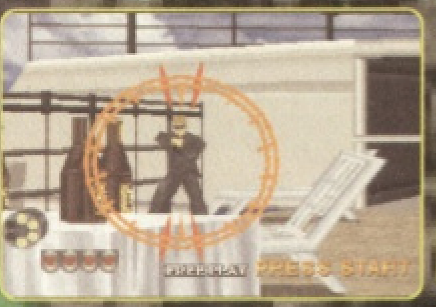
"Get out from behind that bar now! I'm gonna come down on you so hard you'll be looking up to do your shoelaces! You're nicked!"

FOLLOW THROUGH

You now have a choice of routes on each of the three levels, picked by shooting the signs after the second act. These take you through totally different areas, increasing the game's longevity.









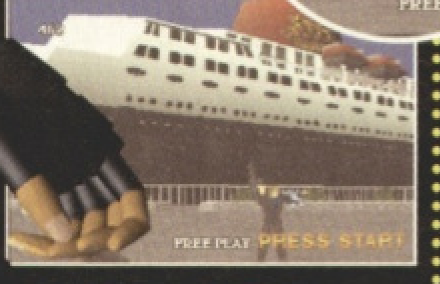
THE SET PIECE

In Cop 2 the action is made more interesting by scene-setting, rather than just strolling through picking off targets, and the size of each level is roughly twice that of Virtua Cop. Learn to expect the unexpected:



CAR CHASE

Cars spin across the path of your pursuit, pedestrians flee, hostages hang perilously from rear windows.



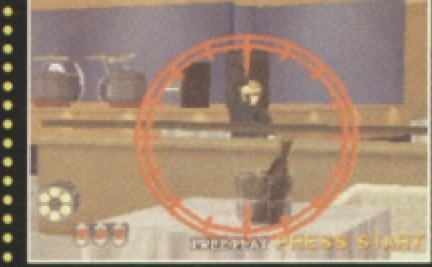
DOCK AREA

An enemy chopper tries to land and offload its cargo of terrorists amid the crossfire.



PORT BUILDING

The reservation desk provides cover for hostiles elements. They didn't reckon on the monitors above their heads.



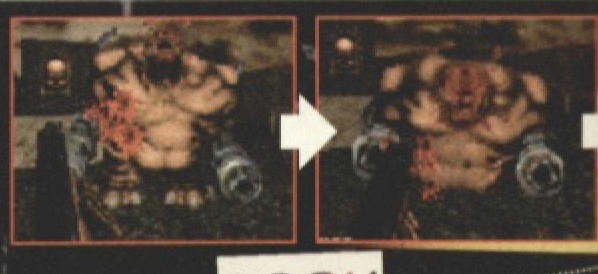
BALLROOM

It's a game of hide and seek, as terrorists hide under the tables, and then assault you from the band stage.



When the Saturn was released in Japan in 1994, one of the first games promised was a conversion of id software's seminal 3D blastathon Doom. Sadly, this was not to be, and the game sank into that deep, dark pit of obscurity otherwise known as 'development hell'. Now, nearly two years later, GT have picked up and dusted down the project, and the game is FINALLY nearing completion.

When Doom was first released on the PC in 1993 it was hailed as a landmark title. You can tell it is was something special, because everyone seems to remember where they were the first time they saw it. In terms of gameplay it wasn't that far removed from its predecessor Wolfenstein 3D, but in terms of technical accomplishment it was streets ahead. Doom's texture mapped environment and clever lighting effects managed to generate something that most video games can only dream of: atmosphere. Creeping down a darkened corridor with grunts and snarls coming from all directions, not knowing what creature lurks around the next corner is truly a terrifying experience. And pretty soon Saturn owners will be able to feel the fear for themselves...









LINK UP FRENZY!

Doom was the first game to offer four player simultaneous action across a PC network. Players could either work together to complete the levels (cool) or battle it against each other to see who was the best (even cooler). It is this aspect of Doom that has shaped the future of multiplayer gaming, and thankfully, it's a feature that has made it to the Saturn version. Set to use the link up cable released later this year, Doom will allow two Saturns to connect together for an unparalleled deathmactch frag frenzy. Trust us: it's the dog's!







MONSTER MUNCH

The forces of hell aren't a pretty sight. These are the creatures sent to overrun the military outposts that form Earth's defence. They are evil, pure and simple, and must be stopped at all costs! Execute with extreme prejudice!



FORMER HUMAN



SARGENT



IMPS

POW!



DEMON



CHAINGUN DUDE



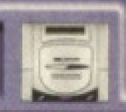
SPECTRE



LOST SOUL



CACODEMON





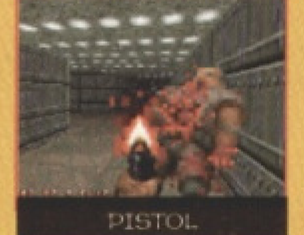
UP YOUR ARSENAL!

There may well be an army of salivating monsters out to rip you limb from limb, but at least you've got some heavy duty ordinance on your side. Here's the low down on all the weapons you can secure in Saturn Doom, including the big boy in the black: the BFG 9000! Go slap some lead upside their head!

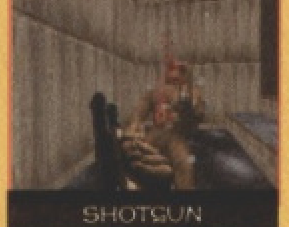


KNUCKLE DUSTER

CHAINSAW



PISTOL



SHOTGUN



SUPER SHOTGUN



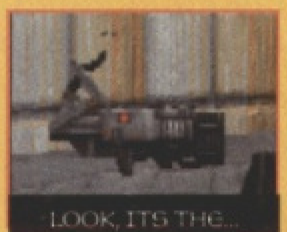
CHAINGUN



ROCKET LAUNCHER



PLASMA GUN



LOOK, ITS THE...



...BFG 9000

AMALGAMATION



There have been so many versions of Doom that Saturn owners may be a tad confused as to exactly what they're getting. Well it's like this, Saturn Doom is primarily based on the PlayStation version: Doom – Special Edition. The levels (52 in all), monsters, monster placing and music are all the same (so no Arch Viles or Spider Mastermind I'm afraid). However, Saturn Doom also has a lot in common with the PC version, namely the sound effects and the overall graphical feel. Does this make it the best version of Doom yet? You'd better tune in next month to find out.













CYBERDEMON

ARACHNOTRON



PAIN ELEMENTAL



MANCUBUS



RENEVANT



HELLNIGHT



BARON OF HELL



The success of Doom inevitably spawned a number of clones, none of which were as good as id's original. One of the better attempts, however, was Raven Software's Heretic. Licensed by id themselves, Heretic utilised the Doom engine to do an ace sword 'n' scorcery take on the familiar 3D shoot 'em up genre. It had mystical cross bows, wands, gorgons, wizards, giant minatours and an awesome dragon rider final boss.

Heretic also benefited from a number of gameplay additions that gave it the edge over the other Doom clones. For a start you could look up and down, allowing players to finally see the blind spots that plagued Doom. Secondly, Heretic introduced the concept of items that could be collected, stored and used at will. And thirdly, you could turn your opponents into chickens. Heretic never received a wide release, however, so didn't do very well. However, this didn't stop Raven from going ahead with a sequel: Hexen. Hexen was loads better than Doom or Heretic, and was in fact, the number one PC 3D shooter right up until Duke Nukem 3D and Quake. It had better graphics, better sound, cooler items AND you could turn your opponents into pigs! Awesome! And guess what? It's headed to a console named after a planet...



The Cleric's fourth weapon - The Justifier - shoots a missile of white light that explodes on contact to release a horde of screaming ghosts that rip everything in the vicinity to shreds! Cool or what!? This is also a good weapon to use in link up deathmatch battles against your mates!

THE STORY SO FAR

Being a sequel and all, Hexen is actually the second instalment in the ongoing Serpent Rider saga. In the original Heretic, an elven champion from the Sidhe tribe rose up to free his world from slavery by defeating the first of the serpent riders, D'Sparil. He succeeded, but that still left two even more powerful serpent riders floating about, who were determined not to make the same mistake as their ex-business partner. In Hexen you come up against the second serpent rider – the mighty Korax – and his three evil henchmen. And just in case you were wondering, Raven are set to finish the trilogy with a third Heretic instalment that uses the Quake graphics engine. Can't wait.





BARATUS THE WARRIOR

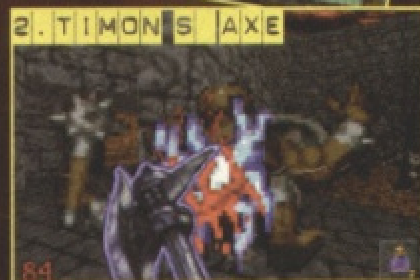
Of the three characters, Baratus is the quickest and most powerful. His brute force makes him a formidable opponent in close combat, while his agility allows him to leap huge distances. However, Baratus' 'get in and hack' approach belies a weakness in long range magical attacks.

speed
armor
magic
strength



1. SPIKED GAUNTLET

A Left and a right! Oof!



2. TIMON'S AXE

Electro-charged axe of doom!



3. HAMMER OF RETRIBUTION

Throws flaming hammers!

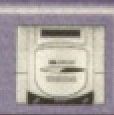


4. QUIETUS!

The runesword of death!

MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES

To capitalise on the RPG nature of Hexen, you can choose to play as one of three different character 'classes', each with their own weapons and physical attributes. Each character can secure up to four different character-specific weapons, all of which consume a mixture of green and blue mana. One nice twist is that the all powerful 'BFG 9000' weapons are split into multiple segments, and you've got to find all the bits before you can use them.









(right) The porkulator turns all monsters into sqealing pigs! They squash real easy! Oink! Oink!



There are plenty of monsters to slap around in the uncharted realms of Hexen, including Ice Wendigo's, Dragons and Ghosts. However, nothing, NOTHING, can prepare you for the final battle with the Serpent Rider Korax! He's awesome!

WHERE DO I GO NOW

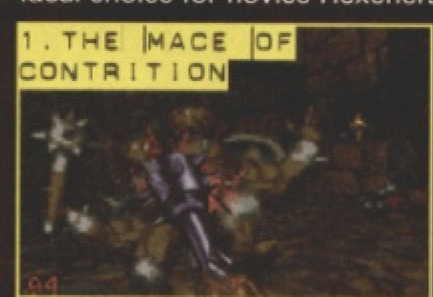
Unlike Doom, or even Heretic, Hexen features a non-linear level structure similar to the brilliant Exhumed. Rather than progress from level to level one after another, Hexen is structured around a number of central Hub levels, from which several sub-levels (and sub sub-levels) can be accessed. Obtaining keys, objects or solving puzzles in these sub levels will alter the central hub, allowing access to new areas. Get it? So now you've got to do a bit of exploring as well as just massacring every creature in the land.

PARIAS THE CLERIC

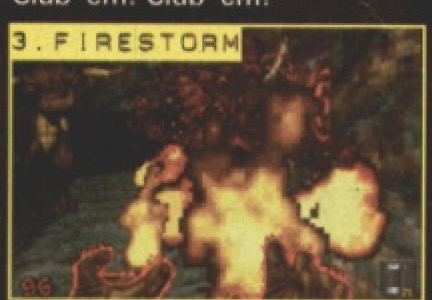
Parias is a well balanced character, with good close and long range offensive capabilities. His speed and stamina are both decent, while the serpent staff allows him to drain health and energy from monsters to replenish his own supply! Parias is probably the easiest character to use, thus making him an ideal choice for novice Hexeners.



Shoots venom and sucks life!



Club 'em! Club 'em!



Cook some monster steak!



Screaming souls rip your foes!

DAEDOLON THE MAGE

Many foolish humans underestimate the power of Daedolon. His physically frail body belies awesome magical powers that make Daedolon second to none in long range combat. However, his low stamina and speed make him a character that only experienced Hexen players can use to proper effect.



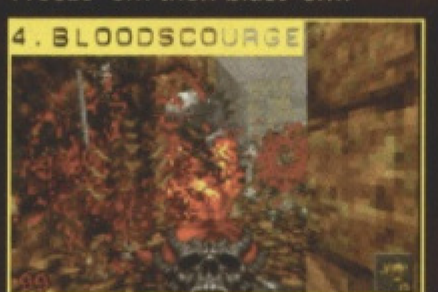
A limitless supply of rapid darts



Freeze 'em then blast 'em!



Arcs of electric death!

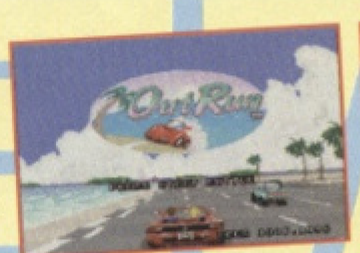


Ultra Powerful homing spheres



As our resident office retro-king, Dave Kelsall, reminds us all on a daily basis: 'old games are great!'. Er, right Dave. But while most 'old' games are about as welcome as a bowl of pork scratchings at a Jewish dinner party, there are still quite a few 'retro classics' out there that we wouldn't mind seeing receive the Saturn treatment..

Riding the current wave of nostalgia, Sega have decided to re-release arcade perfect conversions of three of their most popular retro games: Afterburner, Space Harrier and the immortal OutRun. In Japan these games where released on three seperate CD's, and all did pretty well for themselves. But over here, Sega have decided to put ALL THREE GAMES onto ONE DISC! Excellent! There are also plans to release Alien Syndrome, Galaxy Force (poo!), and Power Drift .



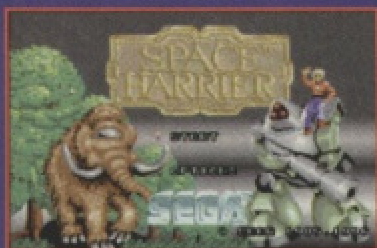




SEGA AGES

SPACE HARRIER (1984)

On its initial release Space Harrier was remarkable not just for its amazing sprite scaling technology and lightening paced gameplay, but also for its unique hydraulic cabinet. You controlled your on-screen hero with what resembles a helocopter control stick, and the cabinet moved with you. For those who don't remember, Space Harrier is a bizarre 'into the screen' shoot 'em up featuring dragons, giant mushrooms and flying gremlin heads.



PREVIOUS CONVERSIONS: Master System, Megadrive (Space Harrier 2), 32X

OUTRUN (1986)

This is the game that most die hard Sega fans will buy the Ages pack for! Yu Suzuki's brilliant racing sim was originally released in a hydraulic Ferrari cabinet complete with steering wheel and gear stick! And now, finally, an arcade perfect version is available to buy. Super fast sprite scaling action with 15 different stages, accompanied by some of the catchiest tunes in gaming histroy! Start your engines...

PREVIOUS CONVERSIONS: Master System, Megadrive (OutRun 2017)

AFTER BURNER (1987)

A personal favourite of mine. Take off from the aircraft carrier Sega and use missiles and machine guns to blast seven shades of hell out of the seemingly neverending supply of enemy forces. Destroy wave after wave of planes (and in the bonus stages, ground targets), lock on with missiles and use the patented F-14 'roll' tecnique to avoid enemy fire. Another hydraulic coin-op that showcased AM2's phenomenal sprite scaling technology, no-one has managed an arcade perfect conversion...until now.

PREVIOUS CONVERSIONS:Master System, Megadrive (Afterburner 2), Mega CD (Afterburner 3), 32X





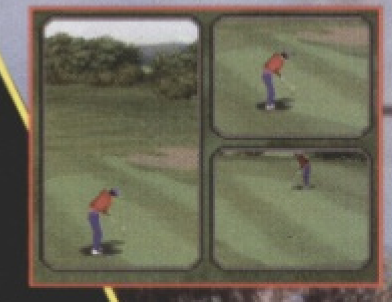


Available on Saturn and PlayStation. Coming soon to PC CD-ROM

actua GOLF

"The best golf game ever"

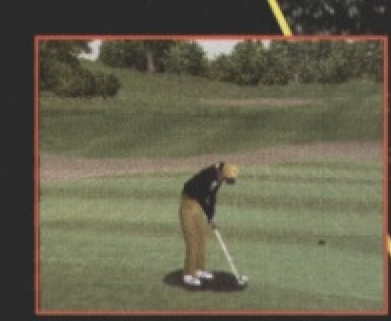
PlayStation Plus



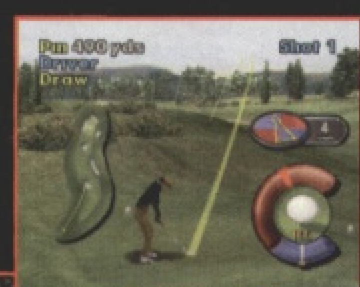
92%
Total Saturn



9 out of 10
PSX-Pro



4 out of 5 "The best PlayStation golf game"
C&VG



8 out of 10 PlayStation Magazine STARPLAYER
PlayStation Star Player Award
Official PlayStation Magazine



Featuring Peter Alliss - "The Voice of Golf"

- Live interactive commentary
- Spectacular scenery using 3D technology
- Two challenging courses to fully test your golfing skills
- True playing environment enabling total freedom of movement
- Fully customised players and club selection
- Multi-player options
- Multi-view shot tracking and replay
- Save game options to track your improvement

















The number of truck racing games could be counted on a single hand of a man with several fingural amputations. Unsurprisingly as the average 'Leyland DAF' is not noted for its 'vitesse'. But Gremlin have said scenario in mind with Hardcore 4x4, and aim to get around the problem with a title that presents new gameplay challenges. Hardcore takes you off the beaten track to six undulating terrains, each offering a rough-hewn circuit which is a handful for any self-respecting off-roader.

The circuits are comparitively larger to any previous driving game, and navigation is made more difficult by a lack of clear markings, occasional route choices and the complete absence of driver toilet facilities. The arcane workings of vehicle tranmission are also fully explored in a game which demands you become proficient with the gearbox, as efficient use of the lower, more powerful gauges enable you to scale the slippery mud inclines while higher gears allow you to take full advantage of the outrageous downward slopes.

The original 3D game engine creates a distinctive world of intricate contours, and convincing vehicle motion to match, produced by sophisticated virtual models of six different all-terrain motors, offering delightful views of the underside when you tip the thing over for the canteenth time. Gremlin have decided against a split-screen mode, instead aiming to harness the promised link-up cable to allow two human players to compete in a field of six competitors. And we should review it next issue.





He might have lost control, he might be flashing his undersides intentionally, I don't know...

THE GEAR

Each vehicle model responds according to build. The choice covers the most popular worldwide workload vehicles. Women, of course, will be attracted to the range of flattering colours.

STOMPER



BASHER



MORRIS



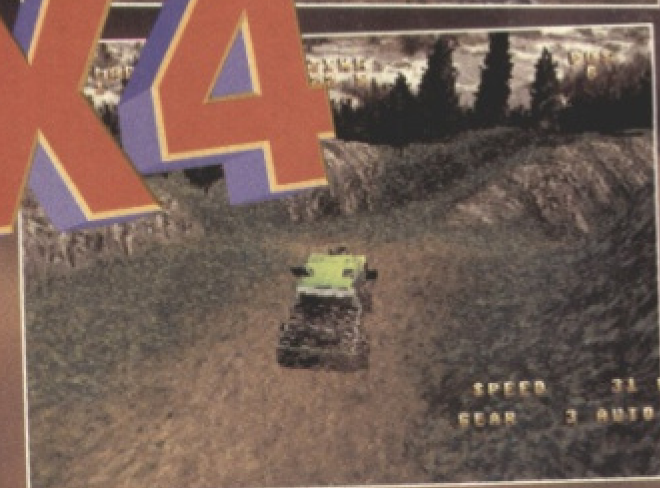




Instead of buying Hardcore, just troll around the English 'countryside' any summer weekend to experience this.







RDCORE 4X4

THE GUTS

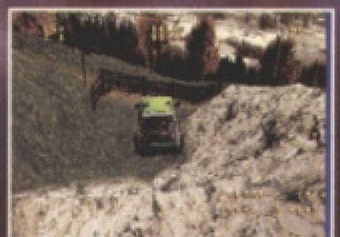


The scenes are what you might expect: the great outdoors, inhospitable deserts and remote mountains. The textures are detailed and the clipping, surprisingly, is kept under control.

BLACK FOREST

Starting on 50m of road, BF soon descends into mud and bumps worthy of Junior Kickstart.





GOBI DESERT

Tank crews watch with interest as you attempt to conquer sand dunes and negotiate tight bends.





GRAND CANYON

Featuring some of the narrowest sections of any course, it's easy to lose sight of your opposition in the winding canyon.





SNAKE PASS

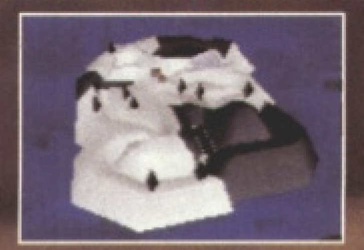
The first half has you toiling up the track and crossing a crevasse on a narrow bridge. The second rewards you with an excellent downhill section.





NORTHERN SIBERIA

Grip, as you might expect, is the issue here, with even the smallest hills requiring decent momentum to overcome.





MOUNT VESUVIUS

The first racing game set on a live volcano, in our experience. The ash driving surface poses the constant threat of disorientation.







MASHER



KILLER









STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

There are certain things in this world that just 'are' – a universal truth that exists regardless of humanity's arrogant and subjective scrutiny. When someone tells me that 'Star Wars was a bad film' that's their opinion, and they're entitled to it. But they're wrong. Likewise, when some says 'Street Fighter 2 isn't the best 2D beat 'em up ever made', they're wrong too. It just is.

Street Fighter 2 is getting on a bit now. We've had SF2: Champion Edition, SF2 Turbo, Super SF2, Super SF2 Turbo, SF2: The Movie, SF2: The Anime Game, SF Alpha and now, Street Fighter Alpha 2. In the near future we can look forward to X-Men Vs Street Fighter (Saturn bound), Street Fighter 3D (not Saturn bound) and Street Fighter 3 (who knows?!). Before the words 'flogging' and 'dead horse' spring to your lips, remember that this horse is not dead. It's very much alive. And winning races. Each successive Street Fighter game has unequivocally improved on the last (except for the Movie and Anime ones) and with Alpha 2 Capcom have reached the absolute zenith of 2D fighting games. And now, less than four months after its coin-op debut, it's coming to the Saturn. Oh joy.



The intro (above) reproduced in all its parallax sprite scaling glory. The PlayStation version also has the intro... in grainy FMV! Ho Ho Ho!

WHAT'S NEW?

So what's new in Alpha 2? Well, the list starts here: custom combos, new moves and graphics for the old characters, brilliant new backgrounds, a refined chaining system, two alpha counters for every character, mid-game 'dramatic battles', special endings and most importantly five all new characters. Well, they're not really all new. There's Rolento (from Final Fight), Gen (from the original Street Fighter), Dhalsim and Zangief (from Street Fighter 2) and the only really new character – the teenage warrior Sakura. But they're all cool.



Alpha's character select screen in all its glory. We already know of five hidden characters, but are there any more? Stay tuned!



CUSTOMISE YOUR COMBOS!

One of the coolest additions to the Street Fighter techniques arsenal is the Custom Combo. Capcom found that chaining hits was much too easy in Alpha so have made it next to impossible in Alpha 2. To replace this, characters have the ability to string together ANY sequence of attacks into a Custom Combo. By pressing two punches and a kick your Super Combo bar turns into a timer, and your character goes into 'Custom' mode. There's even a special flash if you finish an opponent with a Custom Combo.











STREET FIGHTER ZERO 2 ALPHA?!?! EH?!

When Street Fighter Zero 2 (the Japanese name for Alpha 2) was released in the states, Capcom of America added some hidden characters to appease the American public's lust for secrets – Original Dhalsim, Original Zangief, Evil Ryu and the all powerful Shin Gouki. These new characters proved so successful that Capcom of Japan re-released the American version of the game in Japan (a first), renaming it Street Fighter Zero 2 Alpha. We now know that the Saturn version of Alpha 2 will be a conversion of Zero 2 Alpha, meaning Sega owners get all these secret characters and more! The PlayStation version, on the other hand, is of boring old Alpha 2, with NO NEW secret characters! And appalling loading times! And less animation! Ho Ho Ho!



The arcade version of Alpha 2 features a dramatic battle survival mode. No word on whether the Saturn version has such a feature, but we sure hope so.



Shin Gouki versus Shin Gouki. Like in the coin-op, if you can get THREE FINAL ROUND PERFECTS before you reach the last opponent you fight Shin Gouki. He's rock!

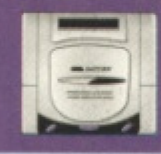


ry.
but

DAN'S TIPS

HELLO BOYS. NOW I'M A STAR I MIGHT BE ABLE TO AFFORD A VEST THAT FITS!

Wotcha. Allow me to introduce myself. Lara Croft's the name and dynamic archaeology's the game. I'm the rough, tough star of Core's new 3D epic Tomb Raider – but don't let my image fool you. I'm really a domestic kinda girl. The hard bitch image is just for the game. In fact, when I'm not off pillaging ancient ruins or battling ferocious wild animals I like nothing more than to spend a quiet evening at home doing the washing, cooking supper, perhaps a spot of knitting. I like to end the day curled up in front of the TV with a mug of Horlicks and the latest issue of Home & Garden. Anyway, Dan asked me to tell you to send all your tips to: Tip Top Tips, Mean Machines Sega, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. And you never know, if it's a new tip you haven't poached out of another magazine you may just win yourself a game! Love, Lara.



SATURN

LOADED

CHEAT MODE

The bods at Gremlin have seen fit to release this rather helpful 'Easter Egg' which should give novice gamers a chance to see the later levels. In pause mode move the selector to BMG volume then press 'L', Z, B X, C and 'R'. Keeping each button held down. Once activated, pressing 'L' from the pause screen will access the cheat menu with all kinds of goodies.

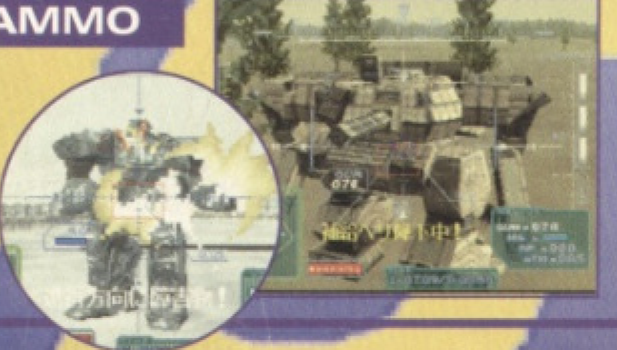


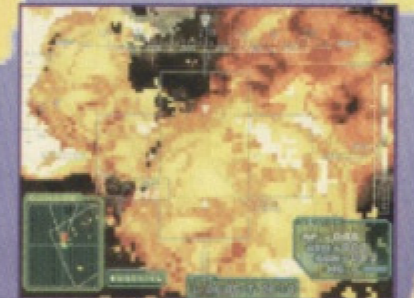


GUN GRIFFON

UNLIMITED AMMO

Ever suffered those 'out of shells blues' on Sega's brilliant Mech 'em up? Well then this code is for you. At the title screen press B, B, B, C then Start to reveal an unlimited supply of all ammo types. Excellent.





STORY OF THOR 2

INCREDIBLE TWO PLAYER MODE!

We were beginning to think we had underrated this brilliant action/adventure title when along came this amazing cheat. Whilst playing the game press Z to call up the weapon menu, then hold X and press the 'L' Button. Release them and a second player will be added to the game! This second transparent Thor is controlled with the two player D-pad and shares the same energy and spirit bar as player one. Incredible!







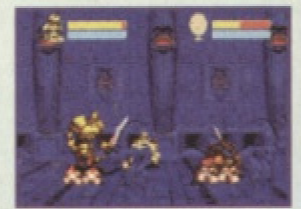
GUARDIAN HEROES

CONTINUES

For all those who bought the UK version of Treasure's incredible slash fest and are bitter that the incredible debug mode doesn't work, here are a couple of tips to help ease the pain. For 99 continues set the game on 'easy' difficulty and begin the game. Allow yourself to be killed after you have jumped out of the starting room and choose 'Give Up'. Now, return to the options mode and set the difficulty to hard. When you begin a Story Mode game again you should have 99 continues!

Also, make use of Nicole's 'I'm angry now' move (B+C) as even though it drains your HPs, it recovers a lot of magic points which can then be used to heal you and your party. This is a good way to get back magic points and gain levels quickly.





WORMS

EXTRA WEAPONS

We're not sure where you enter this code, but we do know it gives you instant Sheep, Mini-Guns and Banana Bombs. Press CZZ CZZ CZZ somewhere and let us know if you figure out how it works. Cheers.





MEGADRIVE

SAMPRAS '96

CHEATS

Here's a list of all the cheats on the password screen for every player, courtesy Chris Duckers of Shropshire. Cheers Chris!

POTTER
BDFDG
BDFGK
BDFHB
BDF
BDFKF

TURNETTE
BBFBG
BBFCH
BBFGC
BBFHJ
BBFKH

DELGADO
BGFCB
BGFFH
BGFGG
BGFHF
BGFFC
BGFKB

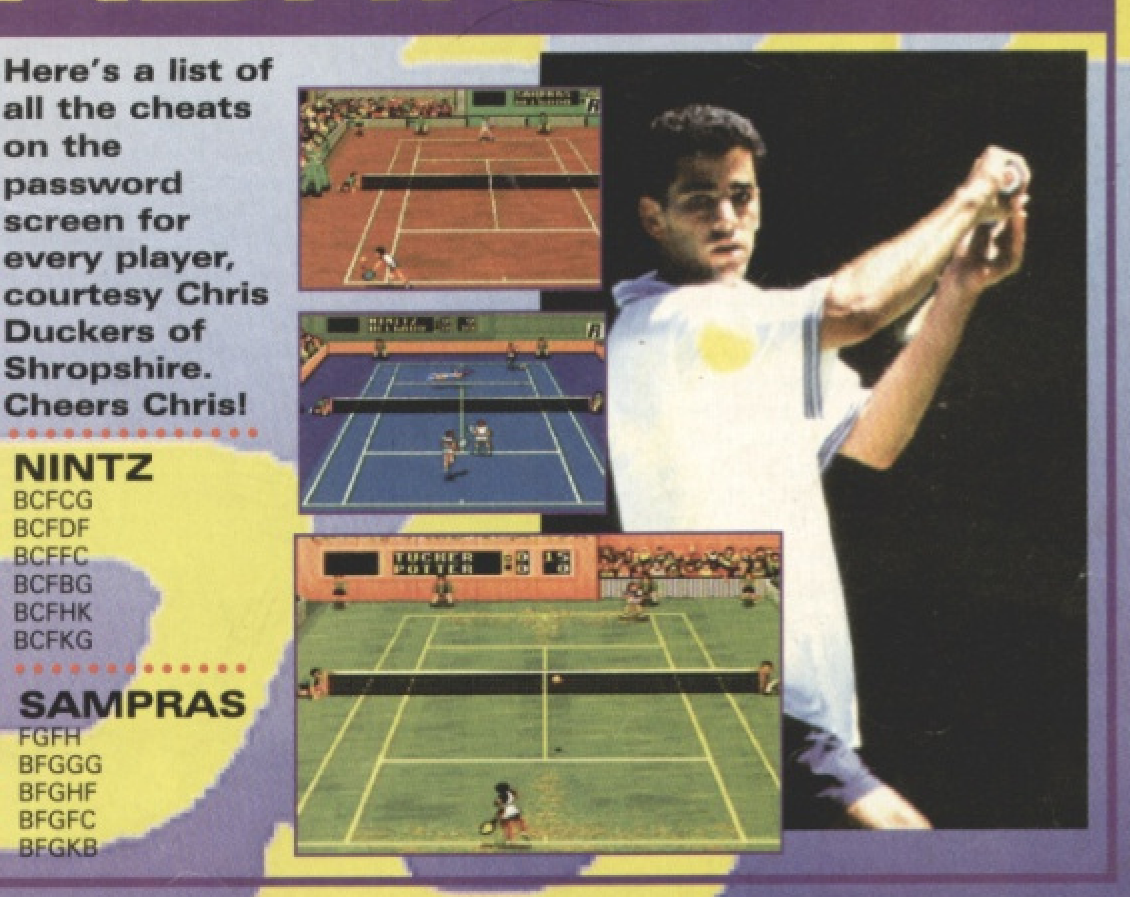
KURASAWA
BJFBG
BJFCH
BJFDD
BJFGC
BJFHJ
BJFKH

NINTZ
BCFCG
BCFDF
BCFFC
BCFBG
BCFHK
BCFKG

TUCKER
BHFCK
BHFDB
BHFGF
BHFHG
BHFJJ
BHFKK

GEVONOTT
BKFCG
BKFDF
BKFFC
BKFGB
BKFHK
BKFKG

SAMPRAS
FGFH
BFGGG
BFGHF
BFGFC
BFGKB



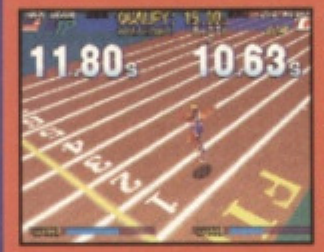
ATHLETE KINGS WORK OUT



Sega's sporty little number has exerted itself in the Saturn charts the last couple of months, so we thought you might find this assortment of hidden features and playing tips useful.

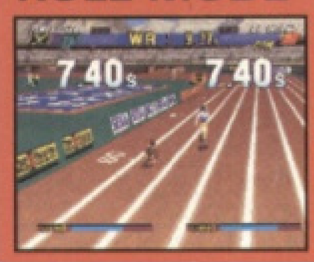
CHEATS

100M DASH: SKIP MODE



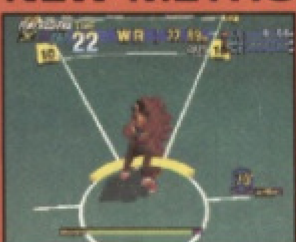
As the announcer gives her introduction, press Up, Left, Down, Right, X in sequence. When the race starts, your character(s) will skip their way to the finish line!

100M DASH: ROLL MODE



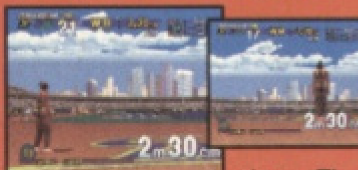
Similar to skip mode, press Up, Left, Down, Right, Y, Up, Left, Down, Right, X before the race. The character(s) will do forward rolls the length of the track.

SHOT PUT: NEW METHOD



Another control method is available which improves on pressing the action button. Start your throw by rolling the D-pad, same as the discus event, to get the character to rotate through 180 degrees, then throw. Also, pressing left or right changes the camera angle of the throw.

HIGH JUMP: NEW METHOD



Before your run-up, press left or right on the D-pad to select between three approach views. The right-hand one is the conventional Fosbury Flop method. The other two offer another jumping method, the old Straddle Jump that was used before the introduction of the Fosbury Flop in 1968.

BLIMP CONTROL



On events where the airship is visible, it can be controlled by using the L and R buttons on the pad in port 2.

PLAYING TIPS

ALL RUN-UP EVENTS

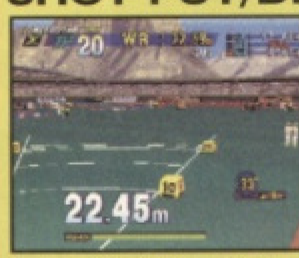
All the events give you more than enough run-up to achieve full speed. Rather than frantically stab the buttons from the off, pace yourself with a gradual build-up of speed.

LONG JUMP



The key to huge distances over 9m is the extending move, achieved by holding the action button after you have selected an angle. You should hear a second 'ping' denoting successful extension. Remember, the optimum angle is 25 degrees.

SHOT PUT/DISCUS



Finding the pad rotation tricky? Use a rag/T-shirt/pair of jocks. Twist the material into a little thumb-sized ball and rub it across the pad in circles. It works. Also, start your rotation on Shot Put as the bar surges, with the discus, wait until his arm is fully extended.

400M



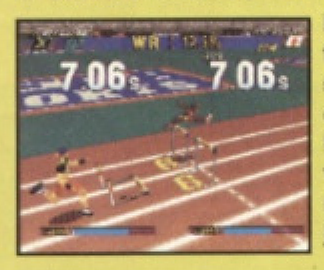
The secret is not to go too early. Use both buttons to catch your opponent on the bend, then use only one button, keeping the power level just level within the fourth stamina segment, to conserve at least three bars of stamina until coming off the final bend when you can romp home for sub-45 second times.

HIGH JUMP

Mark a position about a stride and a half away from the bar for takeoff. The leg flipping move at the end is crucial – start it before you reach the bar.



110M HURDLES



Nothing much apart from mark two strides between each hurdle, tap the buttons to shorten your stride and keep running as you jump.

POLE VAULT



People find this tricky because they lose speed as they plant. Build your speed to peak at the white line and lower and hold the pole at that point. But continue to run with at least one button to maintain power! Release the pole earlier rather than later to project yourself over the bar at an angle.

JAVELIN



It's vital to release the javelin at the last possible moment. Releasing early won't work, because the character won't be in the correct throwing position (regardless of the power level). Watch to see the character pull back, and release at the point shown here.

1500M RACE



The trickiest event. Your strategy is to be a pace-setter, and set off into a strong lead. The CPU drones will catch up. As your energy falls, drop to a single button and use the drones to push you forward. Once your energy bar is replaced, set off again. Don't drop to a single stamina bar, as you'll find it difficult to recover more than one bar.

THOR 2

PART 1

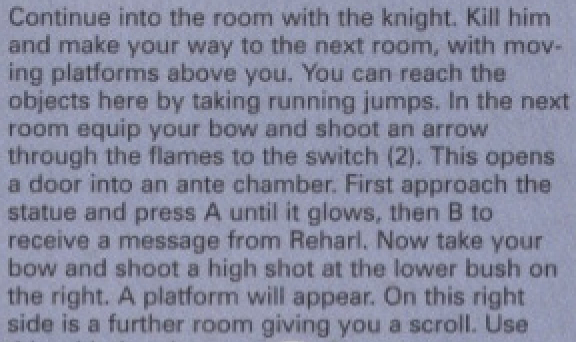
No one does RPG guides like MEAN MACHINES. So we done another one, for the rather ace Thor on Saturn.

1. WATER SHRINE

Make your way from the village chief's hut down into the shrine. Hit the switch on the left to open the steel door. In the next room, you may find some gifts by slashing the reeds. From now on, try all foliage in the hope of finding something. Make your way up the waterfall in the next chamber, push the iron pot onto the level below and use it as a step onto the stone pillars, which take you to the chest containing a bow (1).



Continue into the room with the knight. Kill him and make your way to the next room, with moving platforms above you. You can reach the objects here by taking running jumps. In the next room equip your bow and shoot an arrow through the flames to the switch (2). This opens a door into an ante chamber. First approach the statue and press A until it glows, then B to receive a message from Reharl. Now take your bow and shoot a high shot at the lower bush on the right. A platform will appear. On this right side is a further room giving you a scroll. Use this with the glowing energy point to power your bow for three shots. At the door, use your magical energy (A button) to gain entry.





2. WATER SHRINE BOSS MANEEK

Maneek is simple. Use your sword so you can deflect his yellow crescent attacks. Watch for his jumps, as they create a circular tidal wave when he lands. If he starts to roll, run to the opposite corner. Use running sword attacks to bring him down.



3. FIRE SHRINE

Make your way from the shrine back to the elder's hut. An earthquake will begin, so return to the shrine, but this time talk to the man waiting at the south doors. These will open, leading onto a path which will take you to the Fire Shrine. On all levels of the Shrine you will encounter spiders. These are best tackled by crouching (R button). Summon Dytto and use her to freeze the ice pillars ahead of you to form stepping stones (1). Use these to retrieve the rod from the red chest.

Also on this level is a rock. Push it over the edge to reveal gifts. Now push the iron ball to the right and use it to scale the cliff. Select your rod to learn a new trick: the combination left, right, left, right + attack can break trees with light brown trunks (only that colour!). Here this will bring a chest into your grasp that contains a gem. Any gems you find increase the powers of certain spirits (the aquamarine here will raise Dytto's level).

Now find the obelisk that instructs you about crouching. There is an opening just above it that leads to a chest and switch that will remove the door blocking stairs down. On the next floor you will encounter mild resistance from bombardiers and skeletons. Progress through to the fiery pits, where Dytto is required to eliminate the flames guarding the key to the lower floor (2). There is a blue circle on this level – a useful facility to always replenish your magical power. On the next level down go immediately right and use Dytto to extinguish the flame. Now banish her (X twice) to save magical energy. Now go to the left of the level and smash the tree trunks holding the ball. Jump across the upper level and smash the lone trunk to find the level key. Ignore the black chest – it's a trap. Go to the far right of the level, and face a surprise attack from some soldiers. Beyond the twin torches is the boss.





4. FIRE SHRINE BOSS

Dytto is very helpful here at neutralising the fireballs spewed forth. Watch for the boss' face appearing which is a preliminary to a hot breath attack so stay clear. Jump kicks are the best way to whittle down his energy, and once he's mobile, jump kicking is a safe way to repel him and finish him off.



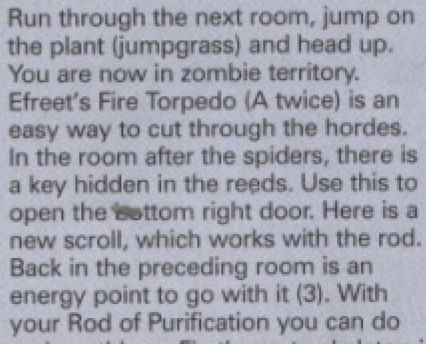






5. EARTH SHRINE

Returning to the village is not hard. A mysterious stranger has arrived. Speak to the elder first, then visit her in her hut. Return to the elder to receive his new commission — finding Bawu. The Earth Shrine is just west of the entrance to the Fire Shrine. Walk left and then along the river's edge, using Efreet to break the tree trunks with his breath (1). Jump down the small square hole and then ascend the long set of stairs. At the top walk right off screen and you'll find a gem on the edge of a cliff (2). Go back left and down to a second larger hole. Here there's a key in a chest that opens a door with a switch hidden under a bush. In the next room, lighting the torch will let you proceed.



Run through the next room, jump on the plant (jumpgrass) and head up. You are now in zombie territory. Efreet's Fire Torpedo (A twice) is an easy way to cut through the hordes. In the room after the spiders, there is a key hidden in the reeds. Use this to open the bottom right door. Here is a new scroll, which works with the rod. Back in the preceding room is an energy point to go with it (3). With your Rod of Purification you can do various things. Firstly, go to skeleton in the top right hand part of that room and use it. He will respond. Now use it on the broad leafed plants – they will turn into Jumpgrass! The powered Rod will also dispatch all undead spirits with one attack. It looks good too.

Use the plants to leave by the left exit. You enter a large open area – go down and to the right, passing the rock. Climb the steps in the next screen and return to push the rock off the ledge. Take the key and activate the bridge made of stepping stones. Jump down the hole directly beside these, then go south out of the screen, south again and across the stone walkway. Go far left, up the steps and along until you come to an archway created by another level. Use Efreet to melt some ice, then summon Dytto and use her to extinguish the flames. One hides a rod power orb (4). Charge your rod and use it to make jumpgrass at the bottom of the room. Climb out then travel up, passing through a narrow gap in the foliage on the right. You should come to a hole next to a torch. Make sure you have Efreet, as he will be lighting a torch when you land. Jump down. Go up and left, taking the ginger root from the chest. When you come to the sign about looking south, take a running jump directly south, and you'll find a chest containing the fourth weapon – a long sword! (6)





Return to the bottom jumpgrass and this time explore the other routes. There's a pad which creates a step between the ridge and the lower level, and a skeleton who may be revived with the rod's power (5). He rewards you with a path to another aquamarine. There are also two holes leading to the two keys you need to enter the boss' lair. The first door is in the bottom left of the room with all the flame pillars.



6. EARTH SHRINE BOSS

Take in Dytto and equip your long sword. Stand bottom left and hold B, waiting to release a spin attack when the tentacle passes. Once it is temporarily destroyed, rush in and make repeated strikes on the main part of the plant. Danger is signalled by the bud swelling. When the hornets erupt, use Dytto's water tornado to bring things to a swift close.





7. SOUND SHRINE

Collect Bawu and return, as the villager suggests, by the river. Talk first with the elder, then Myra, then back to the elder and then Myra, who will give you a cube and directions. There are two trees at the bottom edge of the town. Break the right hand one and collect a stone that gives you rod energy. Leave the town and use this to create jumpgrass at the first hill you come to. There's an aquamarine there. There's another jumpgrass close to the fence beside the pond. Jump into the water and go south – yet another aquamarine, and now Dytto will have a new power. She will now be able to create rod power instantly out of her own magical energy supply (press X once).



Summon Bawu outside the shrine. He will take it upon himself to swallow the ball blocking the entrance. You will face a large guard, then drop down the hole he creates. Go south taking Bawu to swallow the armorats (they cannot be killed). Cross the spike pit, collect the key (1), return to the start. Go right, but before going through the door, take the right passage and collect the sound scroll, which works in conjunction with your bow. In the room beyond the door is a water spout. Use it to summon Dytto and use her healing magic on the withered (grey) bud on the left (2). Now use your rod to create a jumpgrass, and cross the small wall to the chest. Open the door to the south with your new key.

Now you need Efreet. To find a flame use the passage to his shrine. You needn't go far – you can summon him with the blast from the enemy grenades if your timing is good enough! Use Efreet to light the three torches in the new room. Now you must change to Dytto once again, as the next room is a trap, filled with roaming flames which must be put out, and the two switches turned. Leave the chamber and walk to the far right of the level, with a single switch next to a strange gaseous jet. Flicking this opens a steel door. In this room is a bush that conceals a spike. Use your weapon to propel the spike into the stone pillars, which are then destroyed (3). The spike will travel up the long passageway on the left. Wait until it returns and then walk up there to find lots of treasure chests.

➔

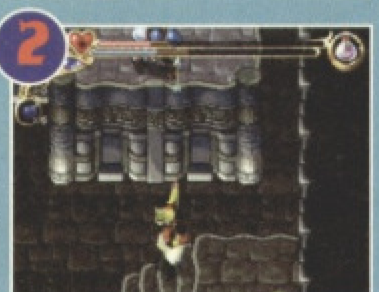




7. SOUND SHRINE CONT...

On the next floor, use the plant to summon Bawu. Look carefully at the floor and you will see three small cracks (two are in the bottom half, which is on a separate screen) (4, previous page). Bawu will prise these open revealing water jets, activating the door to the south. In the back wall of this long rectangular room is a bush. Cut it away to reveal a low passage to crawl through. You can see 'an ancient weapon' which is released when three switches, represented a small stones, are crushed (1). This is down with the stone (left switch) and iron balls for the other two. Now you have bombs. Walk further north in this area and you come to a room with grenaders in an advantageous position on an 'island' of stone. From a point on the stairs bottom-right, fire a high



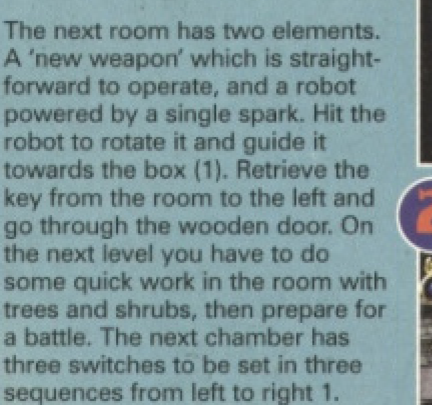






arrow to knock the grenader onto a switch that will wipe out the enemy battalion and provide you with a means to reach the bonuses here, and a clue for later; 'Last. Left, left, right' (2). Go right back to the start and use your bombs as a delay device to allow you through the double doors. There are two spikes in the next room. Propel one down the steps and into the pillar-filled chamber. Make sure it destroys the final pillar at the top of the stairs, for this is where the key to the wooden door (bottom right of level). You can go so far as to guide it through the steel door out of this room and into the single stone pillar in the room full of grenaders, but only get a Rod scroll for your troubles (which you must already have by now)

The next segment starts simply enough – call Bawu to consume the large iron ball (4). Now look for little dots on the floor that activate electric robots. Stay well clear of them until they've completed their task, signified by a little electronic whistle. Your aims are to light the bulbs, and move the iron balls off the switches. You'll get a Fire Scroll to use with your large sword which will let you destroy grey tree trunks. Use rolling slashes (double d-pad and B button) to slice through two at a time. Uncovering the three switches will give you access to the final bulb, which must be lit by one of the room's four electric sparks (3).



The next room has two elements. A 'new weapon' which is straightforward to operate, and a robot powered by a single spark. Hit the robot to rotate it and guide it towards the box (1). Retrieve the key from the room to the left and go through the wooden door. On the next level you have to do some quick work in the room with trees and shrubs, then prepare for a battle. The next chamber has three switches to be set in three sequences from left to right 1. Right, Left, Left; 2. Left, Right, Left; 3. Left, Right, Right. This opens the way to the boss (2).





8. SOUND SHRINE BOSS

The sand chamber is a game of hide and seek. First, stay away from the untextured areas that form the points of a triangle. This is where the skull form of the boss first appears. The other forms are small whirlwinds, which you should avoid by running around the perimeter shadows – attacking the eyes reveals the monster in its only vulnerable state; and a large whirlwind which tracks you but is slow moving. You can also reveal the monster randomly by attacking the rough human forms of sand which periodically appear.







9. SOUND SPIRIT

With your sound spirit, destroy the crystals in the ante chamber. Using the super microwave attack (double A button) will take out all the crystals within an area, and is an economical use of magic energy. The gold crystal will shatter if you hold the A button for an extra large burst. This creates a warp that leads you out the sound shrine. Return to the town, which has been attacked. Heal the elder, who will offer you his sword of Ordan (long sword level 2). Go to Myra in the elder's hut. Leave the town and travel through the Earth shrine area to the furthest hole to the left, which drops you before the crystal blocking the entrance to the Shrine of Darkness. (1, below)



10. SHRINE OF DARKNESS

Walk down the steps of the Shrine and use a bomb to flick the raised switch. Return up the steps and along the right hand ledge and through the doorway. Jump across to the north, then right to find a key. Go north again and push the rock off the platform onto the stone marker (2). Cross the bridge and walk south to find an aquamarine. Return to the first room and jump left across the gap to find a door. The next room contains another rock to be pushed down. Walk north and uncover a key in the crystals (3). An adjoining room contains the earth scroll, which works with the long sword. Return to the room with the moving platforms, which you should now be able to cross. The bush contains a scroll energy that powers your sword so you may destroy stone pillars. Follow the corridor



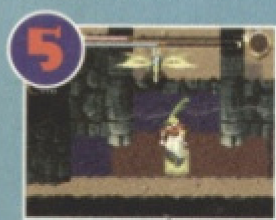




round and down one level to find another scroll. Go back and destroy the four large pillars blocking the way to the next level. In the open area here, open all the chests on top of the pillars (4).



The next room is a mini ambush (nae problem!) and the proceeding room has a chamber that contains a new weapon – the battle knife (6). First go up onto the bridge area and set off the moving platform. Wait until it returns and walk along the narrow area in the foreground (5). There's a chest with a key. Use the key on the wooden door. There's an easy-to-tackle monster behind it, guarding a ruby and another key. Walk onto the bridge and keep going. You'll find a diamond. Walk back to the bridge and take the platform to the mound of soldiers. Retrieve the knife and another key. The room to the north involves a trap. Take Efreet into the room and onto the raised area with the iron ball and switch. Roll the ball onto the switch to create a bridge, then fire Efreet at the torch holder to unleash an enemy (7). Once destroyed the way ahead opens, but another enemy awaits. Power the sword and destroy the pillars still in this room for an elixir. Now proceed east.









This is a complex two-tiered chamber. On the lower chamber you want to set off all the lifts (8) and on the higher chamber you want to light the two torches in the centre which starts lifts which take you to the far left (9). Also light this torch to create a short cut to the entrance of this room. You will probably need to go out and charge the earth scroll again as its needed in the final room in this area, to the south. Reach it by jumping down the small hole on the far left. Use your sword to break a small stone (10) which opens the way to a platform with another small stone, this activates the lift that brings you to... a key (at last!).



Cross the narrow gap on the moving platform and then uncover a blue orb under a tree. Summon Efreet. There are lots of undead in this area. In the next room walk to the far right and melt the ice before destroying any trees (11). Summon Dytto and use her bubbles to weaken







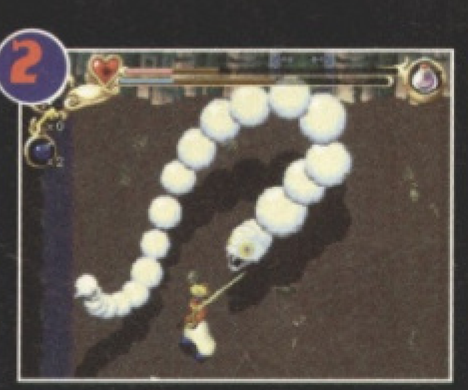
the fire dragon. Walk to the far right and enter the tiled room. Summon Brass using the doors and use his sound wave attack to weaken the big jellyfish for a scroll. Go past the iron ball to the room with two robots (12). The aim is to hit the bulb with the left one. Reposition the left one facing left, hit the left switch, then hit the robot to face down. Reposition the robot to face left. Now position the right robot to face down. Hit the right switch and hit the robot to face left so as to intercept the left robot. Sounds very confusing, but the principle is simple. Armed with another key, move to the next level.

Down here, the sparks can be temporarily neutralised by a microwave attack. You'll encounter a robot. Don't worry, it only activates a puppet who tells you 'when the monster growls, strike its tail'. Get yourself prepared for a big encounter. First, the dragons in the ante chamber are easy to dispose of, just stand your ground in the doorway.

11. DARKNESS BOSS

This starts life as an egg (1), and only walking round killing its attendant ghosts seems to wake it. Once alive, it's a monstrous worm (2). As the puppet advises, the best time to strike is when the creature howls at you, as it's stationary, but hold back until the head actually goes for you, as it tracks you. Patience is requires as the tail moves around. If it's on the ground, you will have to crouch to hit it. Don't do running attacks with the large sword, as the chance of fatal contact is too risky.









NEXT MONTH

We continue with a guide to finding the final spirit, Agito's Lair, a secret area and the bits you might otherwise have missed. Be there!





By now every self respecting Saturn owner will have got himself (or herself) a copy of NiGHTS and a sexy black analogue pad to play it on. You'll probably already be practising hard to notch up a brilliant high score for the great EMAP Score Attack Challenge. Not wishing to see our readers come last in the mag ladder, here are some useful tips to give you the edge.

MIGHTY NiGHTS!

It's a good idea to take some time out first to master the control of NiGHTS. Here are a few pointers.

THE 'L' AND 'R' BUTTONS

The L and R buttons can be used for more than just making NiGHTS perform stunts. They actually enable him to make 90 degree turns and sharp manoeuvres that are otherwise impossible. Plus, with practice, they can also allow him to perform larger paraloops.

KILLING NIGHTMARIANS

There are four ways NiGHTS can destroy Nightmarians: by paralooping them (catching them in the void of his loop), Drill Dashing them (flying into them with the dash button held down), Touch Dashing them (grabbing them then dashing them), and Touch Looping them (grabbing them and spinning around them).

Firstly, by paralooping around them he can catch them in his void and blast them away. Secondly he can Drill Dash them (ie fly into them with the dash button pressed down) sending them flying away as balls. Thirdly, he can Touch Dash them (grab them THEN Drill Dash them).

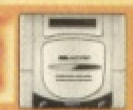
When you Touch Dash the Nightmarians they fly off as balls. If a ball hits a Nightopian he lays a mutant egg!

PARALOOPING ITEMS

NiGHTS' paraloop is essential to the game, and not just for destroying Nightmarians. When NiGHTS performs a paraloop, he sucks in all of the items caught within the void of the loop – even if they are in the background or foreground of the course. These items are not collected immediately (as they would be if NiGHTS touched them) but instead 'home in' on NiGHTS and are collected a second later. This is absolutely crucial to sustaining large links, as 'dragging' items in this fashion allows NiGHTS to keep a link going across a large gap where there are otherwise no items to perpetuate the link.

SNAG AND DRAG

We can take the principal of paralooping items during links one step further. We know that 'dragging' items allows NiGHTS to keep a link going across a large gap, but what about while he's actually looping the items in the first place? Well, you may have noticed that most clusters of stars or chips appear in a circular formation. This is to allow NiGHTS to collect the OUTSIDE items of the cluster while he loops the middle ones which will then be dragged after him. With practice you can even use this technique on a line of three chips or stars.





POINTS MAKE PRIZES

Unless you're looking to develop a particular level's A-Life (which we'll deal with next month), your aim when starting a new go in NiGHTS is simply to score as many points as possible! And don't worry if you're still struggling to achieve a C grade: the grade for each course is directly related to the score.





CHECKPOINT 1: FREE THE IDEYA

Once you've chosen your dream and the level has loaded, your first objective is to free the course's Ideya gem from the floating balloon claw as quickly as possible. This is because A) you get a load of points for destroying the claw quickly (120 minus the time it took you to free the gem multiplied by 100), and B) everything you score is DOUBLED once the gem is in your possession. So collect 20 blue chips and head straight for the claw!

CHECKPOINT2: BONUS TIME

Despite the name, Bonus Time is where the majority of the game is played. Once you've destroyed the claw and got the Ideya, your only aim is to zoom around the course as many times as possible scoring as many points as you can in the allotted time! Here's a run down on the things NiGHTS can do to score points.





CHIPS

Chips give you points in two ways. Firstly, they can be collected in sequence with other items to sustain a link. Secondly, when NiGHTS returns to his temple at the end of each course you are awarded 50 points for every gold chip you have collected. So 99 chips (the maximum you can collect) scores you 4950 points.



STARS

You may have noticed that sometimes a Pian appears above NiGHTS' temple holding a board with a number on it. This is the total number of Stars that NiGHTS has collected on that dream, and by flying into the Pian on the last course (course four) you can cash in your Stars to the tune of 10 points per Star.



There is a reason to collect stars (above). And here's a mutant freak Nightopian (right). Scarey!





NIGHTMARIANS

You get a hearty 200 points for killing a Nightmarian in any fashion. Of course, this is doubled during Bonus Time so it's worth waiting until the Ideya is in your possession before destroying the Nightmarians.



POINT BALL

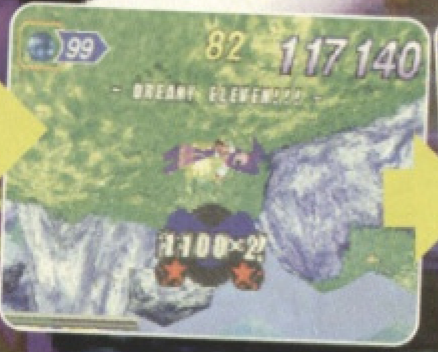
NiGHTS opens a point ball by flying into it then achieving a specific link size indicated by the number on the ball. The number counts down as you notch up the link, and when it reaches zero the ball opens awarding you 1000 points for your troubles.



STUNT RIBBON

The Stunt Ribbon is one of the most effective ways of scoring points. When NiGHTS flies through an Acrobat Hoop he is given approximately 6 seconds in which to perform as many stunts as possible using the 'L' and 'R' buttons. Generally you score a 100 points per stunt (so a Dreamy Eleven would be 1100 points), though if you can manage 12 or more stunts you are awarded a 'Superb!!!' rating and get a massive 2000 points! A cheeky way of doing this is to simply fly along the ceiling or floor tapping 'L' and 'R'. The floor cuts the stunts short, allowing you to rack up the points in a shorter space of time.



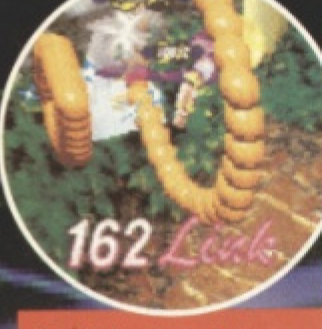














A 314 link on Frozen Bell course one! Nick is something of an ubermeister when it comes to NiGHTS.

LINKS

A link can be started and sustained by one of three things: flying through a hoop, collecting a star or collecting a chip. Links score the corresponding number of points multiplied by ten (ie. a 3 link is worth 30) up to the ten link mark, after which the score peaks and each successive link scores 100 links. After each item in the link has been activated you have one second in which to reach another item before it fades away and the score accumulator is reset. Certain courses allow you to achieve what is known as a 'continuous link', that is, a link which you can sustain from one lap to the next, allowing for (in theory) a link size that is limited only by the amount of time you have.





CHECKPOINT THREE: THE BOSSES

A good performance against the boss (or Nightmaren) is absolutely critical to achieving a record breaking score. When you beat a boss you are awarded a score multiplier directly related to the amount of time taken, anything from X1.0 (the worst) to X2.0 (the best). In order to get X2.0 you've got to defeat the boss in record time - normally under 20 seconds! Also, although it's possible to select the easiest boss from the NIGHTMAREN RANDOM OFF option in the diary, real NiGHTS masters will always play with the RANDOM setting ON.



GILLWING

X2.0 MULTIPLIER: 110 seconds

There are two ways to kill Gillwing. The first (and slowest) is to repeatedly grab his head and touch-dash it. The second (and fastest) is to paraloop his body. By performing a large tear-shaped paraloop that encompasses both his head and tail, it is possible to destroy Gillwing in ONE GO! A guaranteed X2.0 multiplier.

PUFFY

X2.0 MULTIPLIER: 95 seconds

You do not need to spin Puffy to gain power for the throw. The spin is used to pick the right angle at which to fire off Puffy through the next breakable section. Be careful not to grab her after she has just rebounded off a wall or you'll incur the dreaded 5 second penalty. You can't afford to make one mistake if you want the X2.0 multiplier.

GULPO

X2.0 MULTIPLIER: 105 seconds

An easy boss, but one that is surprisingly hard to do quickly. The trick is in being able to tell which winged bumper will propel you through the aquadome at the right level to hit Gulpo. Picking the right height is easy (there's only three), but judging the angle is more difficult. Often it pays to travel left around the aqua-dome as well as right.



CLAWZ

X2.0 MULTIPLIER: 100 seconds

We still haven't found a good way of beating Clawz quickly yet, so if you know of one – tell us! Something that does occasionally work is to use the mice to propel NiGHTS in the opposite direction to Clawz, and sometimes you'll get lucky and take him by surprise as he stops to light a fuse.



REALA

X2.0 MULTIPLIER: 105 seconds

Probably the quickest boss in the game, simply because you only have to hit him three times. Watch as Reala approaches and time a paraloop so that he flies right into in on his way to reach you (this takes a bit of practice). Repeat two more times and voila!





JACKLE

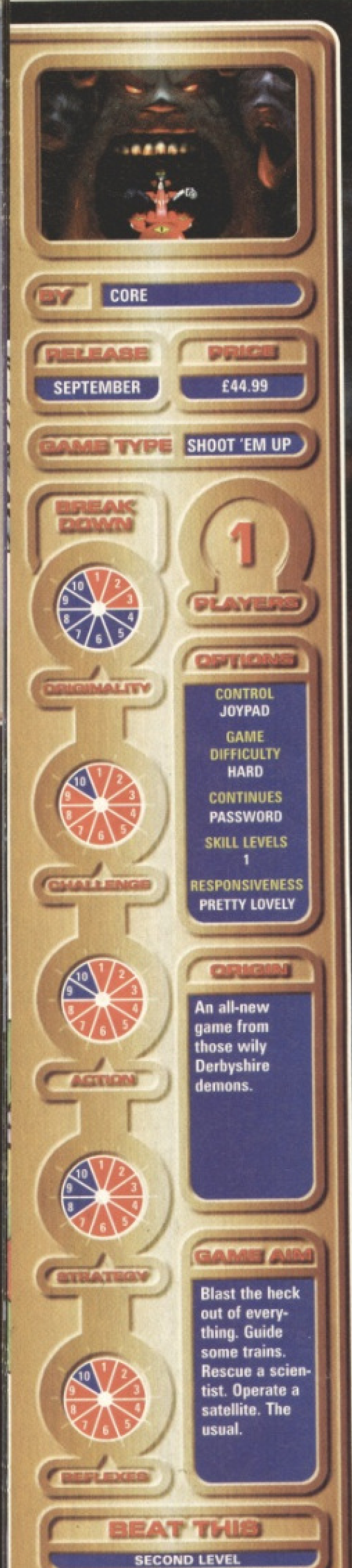
X2.0 MULTIPLIER: 100 seconds

Jackle is a tricky boss initially, but easy once you get the hang of him. Use the dash button to close the gap, and adopt a high/low pattern to dodge his multi-coloured throwing cards. Then, once you grab his body, touch dash him and keep an eye on which direction his coat goes. If you can stay between him and his coat, you can defeat him in record time.




TOMB RAIDER
SWAMPED.
BULLETS CARVE THE AIR AND CUT A DEADLY ATMOSPHERE...
TENTH ONE GOES DOWN !
BUT THE BRAIN-DEAD AREN'T SO EASY TO KILL...
BEAT THAT!
AAH!
HMMM ?
RIGHTY-HO !
STREWTH !
NORMALLY THOUGH, A FINER DEGREE OF INCAPACITATION IS REQUIRED...
YOU CAN'T EAT THIS RAW ...


UHMMMM
YOU HUNGRY?
JUST NEED TO POP IT IN THE OVEN A WHILE!
FWOOSH
THE STENCH OF ROTTED BODIES INGNITES IN A BLAST
FHOOM!!
NOOO! STOP PLEASE - IT'S DEATH'S DOOR !
GREAT - THE PLEASURE'LL BE ALL MINE!



Time was when you knew what you were doing with a game just by the title. Games like Paperboy, or Burger Time, or Don't Pull spelled it out pretty clearly. You delivered papers, or made burgers, or pushed. Nowadays though, with all yer trendy liberal games producers on the scene, those old-fashioned values are right out the window. No, now we get designer names like Exhumed, which sounds like something by Damien Hirst. Why can't these so-called games programmers go back to calling their software things like "Worldwide Soccer '97"?

Anyway, we digress. What Mr Smartypants Blam! Machinehead is about is this bloke called the Machinehead, who has inadvertently made himself a cybergod and destroyed practically the whole human race. You must fire a big nuclear missile at him and blam! You've saved everyone. Now what's that got to do with the title exactly?

BLA
machi

GATHER ROUND, CHILDREN...

The story of Blam! is pretty complex. Basically the Machinehead bloke has infected the whole world with a self-replicating nanotechnology virus. You're Kimmy Stride, one of a team of scientists who've developed a vehicle kitted with a nuke (the Vorpal Blade) to destroy MH, but your perverse assistant Orville has strapped you to the bomb and demands you navigate it personally to the Machinehead!







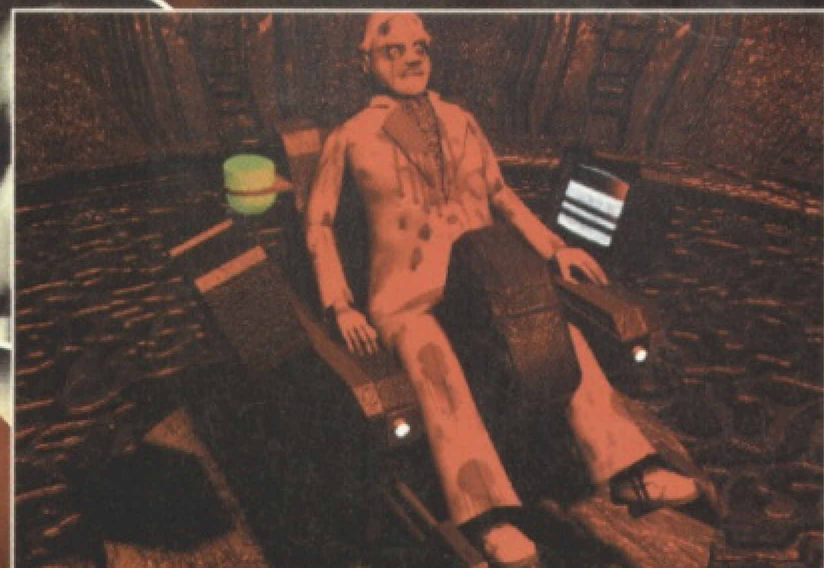


ORIENTEERING CAN BE FUN

Maps in Blam!, are for young sexy people who'd like to stay that way. As well as objectives, they highlight enemies, and their bullets. Keep an eye on the cartography if you want to get anywhere.

AM!

inehead

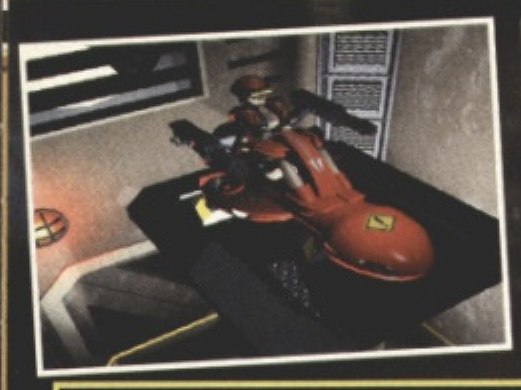


UNREALITY BITES

Because the planet is now in the grip of a nano virus, things are a little squiffy. Thus the shape of the world is now subject to laws of Unreality. For example, a mountain which blocks your way can be flattened by finding an Unreality key that corresponds to a numbered Unreality station. With both combined the mountain is removed. Those keys are very well protected, for your inconvenience.









WITH THEIR TANKS

With a prefix like Blam! it's no surprise that this game is absolutely crammed with heavy weapons. You start with Chain Gun and missiles. Pick up extra jollies on the way.



HOMING MISSILES Like missiles, but with added Lock-On.



FLAME THROWER Crap range, but great destructive potential over grouped foes



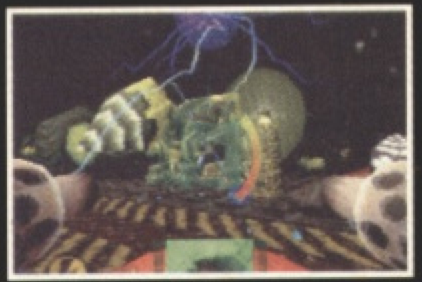
DISRUPTOR A rapid-fire laser gun. Elusive, but killer usage.



LOB A grenade launcher which blows up a large area of scenery/



DESTRUKTINOK We made the name up.Knacks just about anything in the area.



ION STORM The smart bomb to end 'em all. Kicks off a lengthy nuclear storm.

REALITY BITES AS WELL

Along with the Unreality, there are also Reality Keys. Far from making the real unreal, they're quite boring. In fact, instead of Reality Keys, they could quite easily just be called Keys, because all they ever do is open doors. Still, they're essential to your progress and shouldn't be mocked.



COMMENT

RAD

Machinehead certainly wins a prize for its groovy name, and probably scoops the Gratuitous Sexism of the Year award as well for its heroine. Whilst Machinehead is definitely playable (once you've gotten used to the tricky controls), the format is similar to Core's Thunderhawk and Shellshock. However, Blam! is superbly executed. The graphics move smoothly, the enemies look absolutely ACE and there's enough to keep both trigger finger and brain active. Not an earth-shattering idea, maybe, but totally enjoyable and the story is cool too.

COMMENT



GUS

In a time when most games have the consistency of spam, Core are still providing large wads of British beef for hardcore gamers. Blam will be lapped up by shoot 'em up fans, who will appreciate the challenge. It also looks excellent in motion: super-smooth. The control method is very tricky, but sophisticated and responsive once you've served an apprenticeship. Although the game idea veers towards the familiar, Blam does seem to offer something new. Much better than Shellshock, it should be said. And I LOVE the music.

GRAPHICS



▲A lot of work has gone into designing the monsters.

▼The backgrounds are pretty boring.

ANIMATION



▲ Some creatures have most amazingly realistic movement going – especially the spiders.

▼Some monsters hardly move at all.

MUSIC



▲There is some.

▼It's a bit dull, really. No offence. It's not bad. But it could have been more atmospheric.

EFFECTS



▲Loads and loads of big bangs, along with different death yelps for every foe.

PLAYABILITY



▲Once you've learned how to fly your craft it's instinctive and full of death and depth.

▼You may have played a game much like it before.

LASTABILITY

89

▲Loads and loads of missions, which get very hard indeed. Passwords limit frustration.

▼Don't know if you'd return once it's finished..

OVERALL

Blam wouldn't impress your mates with its flashiness or originality, but it delivers solid gaming nourishment all the same.



Little Johnny was enjoying the sedate pace of his new lift to school, when...





BY	SEGA
RELEASE	OCTOBER
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	ISOMETRIC
PLAYERS	1
MEG	24

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
EASY

CONTINUES
COLLECTABLE

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
INERTIA!

ORIGIN

The latest in the SONIC series sees Travellers Tales take the spiky blue hedgehog into the third dimension.

GAME AIM

Destroy the badniks, rescue the flickies and deposit them in the giant gold rings.

BEAT THIS

Complete the game with all Chaos Emeralds.

Oi! Megadrive owner! Yeah YOU! Are you tired of hearing that your system is dead? Tired of reading that Sega are no longer supporting the 16 bit format? Tired of the lack of decent new software available for your machine? Well QUIT WHINING and COP A LOAD OF THIS. Sega may have just the answer to your prayers...

What do all of the Sonic games have in common? Apart from the fact that Sonic's in them, I mean? Give up? They're all flinkin' ace aren't they! Particularly Sonic CD on the Mega-CD which is still an MMS favourite. So when Sega announced that they were producing a new Sonic game, we all sat up and took notice. Especially when we heard that this particular Sonic game would be on the humble Megadrive ... and in 3D!

After the recent shock announcement that Sonic X-Treme (set to be Sonic's first Saturn outing) was KILLED in mid-development, all eyes are now on Sonic 3D to see in which direction Sega wish to take the Sonic series. Licensing out the franchise to Travellers Tales (responsible for the amazing Toy Story) is a bold move, but has it payed off?

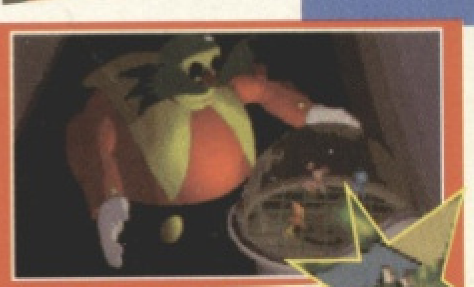
SONIC 3D





I'M DA BOSS!

What would a Sonic game be without Dr. Robotnik (Eggman in Japan) and a full complement of his evil minions? Sonic 3D's many levels are absolutely chokka with dastardly robots and treacherous traps which vary depending on the theme of the zone. What's more, the end zone bosses in Sonic 3D are some of the most spectacular Doctor Robotnik encounters yet seen in a Sonic game! Have a look for yourself!



GREEN GROVE ZONE

The first zone is pretty easy going, filled with docile badniks and easily located secrets. The perfect place to get to grips with controlling Sonic and collecting Flickies. The first Dr. Robotnik drops a spiky ball which bounces after Sonic.







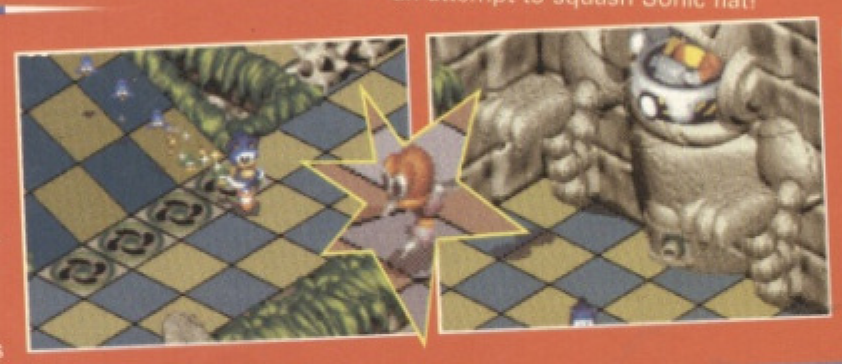


SPRING STADIUM ZONE

Spring Stadium is Sonic 3D's 'pinball' stage, with bumpers and lights galore. One of the more recent additions to Sonic 3D, this zone is made particularly tricky by the large numbers of spikes on the floor. Dr. Robotnik's floating bubble capsule has gained a pair of arms in an attempt to squash Sonic flat!

RUSTY RUIN ZONE

Sonic ventures into an Aztec maze full of ancient ruins and crumbling platforms. Similar in appearance to the Aquatic Ruin Zone in Sonic 2, Rusty Ruin Zone introduces the player to Sonic's rock-breaking pirouette move. Dr. Robotnik attacks in the form of a giant statue, and Sonic must use its stone arms as platforms to reach the vulnerable head portion.





PULL THE BIRDS!

While the structure of Sonic 3D remains much the same as in previous Sonic games (each zone has two stages followed by a boss) the game objective has changed significantly. Rather than just have Sonic dash for the end of each level (as with previous Sonic games), this time Sonic must first locate and collect a number of Flicky birds which he needs to open the stage exit. These birds are hidden within the robotic shell of enemy Badniks, and only by successfully Spin Dashing them can Sonic free the fluffy Flickies into his possession. This adds an element of exploration to the game, as Sonic must search the various levels high and low to find the elusive birds.



Locate the enemy badniks.



Pop them to reveal a flicky bird!



Collect the flicky by touching him. He will follow Sonic until either he, or Sonic, is hit.





Collect the full quota of flickies! Check the indicator at the bottom right of the screen.

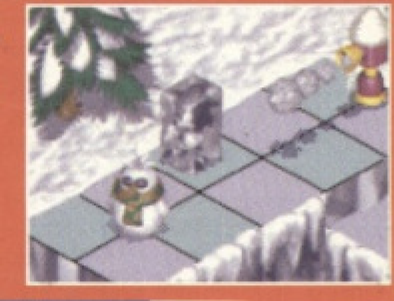


Find the end of the stage, indicated by a giant goldren ring.

Deposit the flickies and stand on the trap door! A lift will take you the next stage. Go Sonic!

DIAMOND DUST ZONE

A genre standard 'ice' zone with slippery floors, smashable spikes and ice flows. Lumps of snow hide crucial bouncy platforms, while the badnik contingent is largely made up of snowmen that turn Sonic into a lump of ice! He of the large body and stick legs attacks in his bubble capsule again, this time with multiple snowball firing cannons and exploding snowmen!





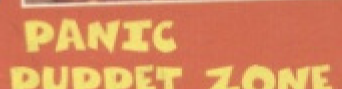






VOLCANO VALLEY ZONE

Fire! Fire! This zone is surrounded by bubbling magma which can prove fatal to an unprotected Sonic. Flame jets and spiky badniks make holding on to a long chain of Flickies particularly tricky, while smashing certain destructible rocks reveals hidden tunnels to secret areas. Smelly old whisker face appears at the centre of a network of narrow pipes along which Sonic must tread in order to reach him.



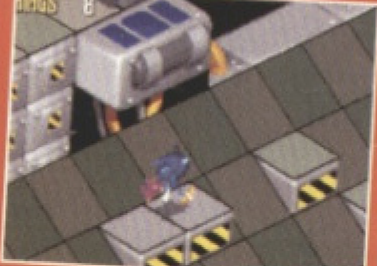
PANIC PUPPET ZONE

This zone looks similar to the Gene Gadget zone, though the styling is slightly different. Most of the obstacles are the same, though rings and bonuses are harder to come by. This is the toughest zone of all, and only by using all of the techniques you have learned on previous levels can Sonic escape unscathed. This time you can't hit Robotnik directly. A bit of thought is what's needed.









A tricky bit this. One slip and Sonic's history.



You can see Sonic through the glass!



Dodge the rockets and bash Robotnik!

GENE GADGET ZONE

Perhaps the most spectacular looking stage in the game. Metallic panels and pipes line the stage while rotating lasers and electrified pads make the going tough. Sonic can also experience brief periods of weightlessness by moving onto the circular fans situated on the floor. Egg-face appears on a conveyor belt similar to the Wacky Workbench boss in Sonic CD. Dash up the conveyor belt, dodge the spikes and missiles and BOP him one.



CONSOLE CAPERS

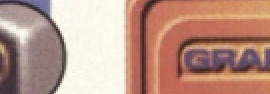
Making a return to the world of Sonic are the now familiar power-up consoles, dotted about the landscape. These bonuses are now even more crucial to Sonic's success than ever before, so here's a run down on what to look out for.

SPEED SHOES



Upgrade your shoes for these super speedy custom red turbo-sneakers.

RINGS



Gives Sonic 10 rings in one go, funnily enough. Useful for hitting the 50 ring mark needed to reach the special stages.

INVINCIBILITY

Pop this and Sonic becomes invincible! While the tune lasts at least.

SONIC SHIELD

Gives Sonic a translucent shield which protects him for one hit. Orange shield lets Sonic dash attack, while Red shield protects Sonic from fire.

SONIC BOOM!

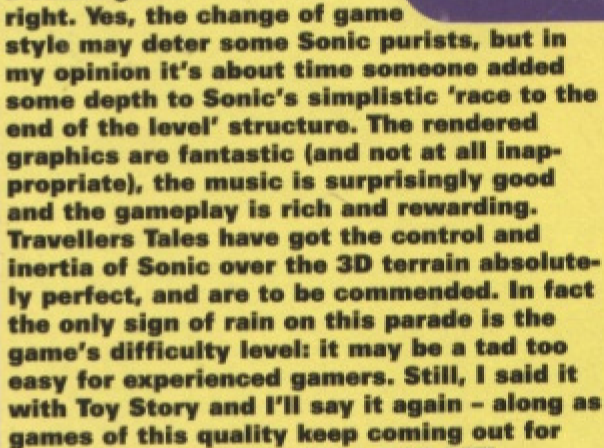
One of the Sonic series' key assets has always been its simple 'one button fits all' control system. However, while that was fine for a 2D environment (where Sonic could only move left and right), it doesn't really suit Sonic 3D's isometric universe. To cope with the added dimensions, Sonic 3D introduces a new button to replace the up and down functions on the d-pad. While A and C make Sonic jump as per usual, the B button makes Sonic curl up into a ball and roll (or charge a roll). Sonic can also perform other actions during the game such as pirouettes and loops, though these are moves are only accessed by using certain objects dotted around.







COMMENT



DAN

For once I'm speechless. I must admit I was a bit sceptical at the idea of Sonic's first 3D outing appearing on the humble Megadrive, but once again Sega have proved my worries groundless. Sonic 3D is a legitimate addition to the Sonic series, and a smart game in its own right. Yes, the change of game style may deter some Sonic purists, but in my opinion it's about time someone added some depth to Sonic's simplistic 'race to the end of the level' structure. The rendered graphics are fantastic (and not at all inappropriate), the music is surprisingly good and the gameplay is rich and rewarding. Travellers Tales have got the control and inertia of Sonic over the 3D terrain absolutely perfect, and are to be commended. In fact the only sign of rain on this parade is the game's difficulty level: it may be a tad too easy for experienced gamers. Still, I said it with Toy Story and I'll say it again – along as games of this quality keep coming out for the Megadrive, 16-bit WILL NOT DIE!

A BRIDGE TOO FAR!

Like all Sonic games before it, Sonic 3D features an incredible 3D special stage just waiting to be discovered. By collecting 50 rings and locating one of Sonic's hidden pals (Tails and Knuckles) Sonic is warped to a special stage where he must cross a narrow bridge, dodging spikes and collecting rings in order to reach the Chaos Emerald at the other end. There are eight emeralds to collect, and the stages vary slightly between Tails and Knuckles.





COMMENT



GUS

Travellers Tales seem to be re-educating the world about the Megadrive single-handedly. Sonic 3D's graphics are a gob-smacking marriage of speed and detail. The game is a total departure from the Sonic series — which some people have been demanding for ages. I don't think it has quite the same instant appeal, but you can't complain about Deja Vu. There's massive depth, the game idea is cool (only the bonus level lets it down a bit). But what Dan says about the difficulty level is true, this is probably even easier than Sonic 1!

GRAPHICS 93

▲ Stunning rendered graphics take Sonic into the third dimension.
▼ The checkerboard floor is a bit samey.

ANIMATION 93

▲ In a word, amazing. SGI workstations put to good use on the Megadrive – Donkey Kong County eat your heart out!

MUSIC 92

▲ Catchy tunes for each zoom, with remixes for the second stage!

EFFECTS 90

▲ You'll recognise the effects from previous Sonic games.
▼ Not quite the same advance as in other areas.

PLAYABILITY 91

▲ The control and inertia of Sonic is perfect, and the whole experience is fast, furious fun.

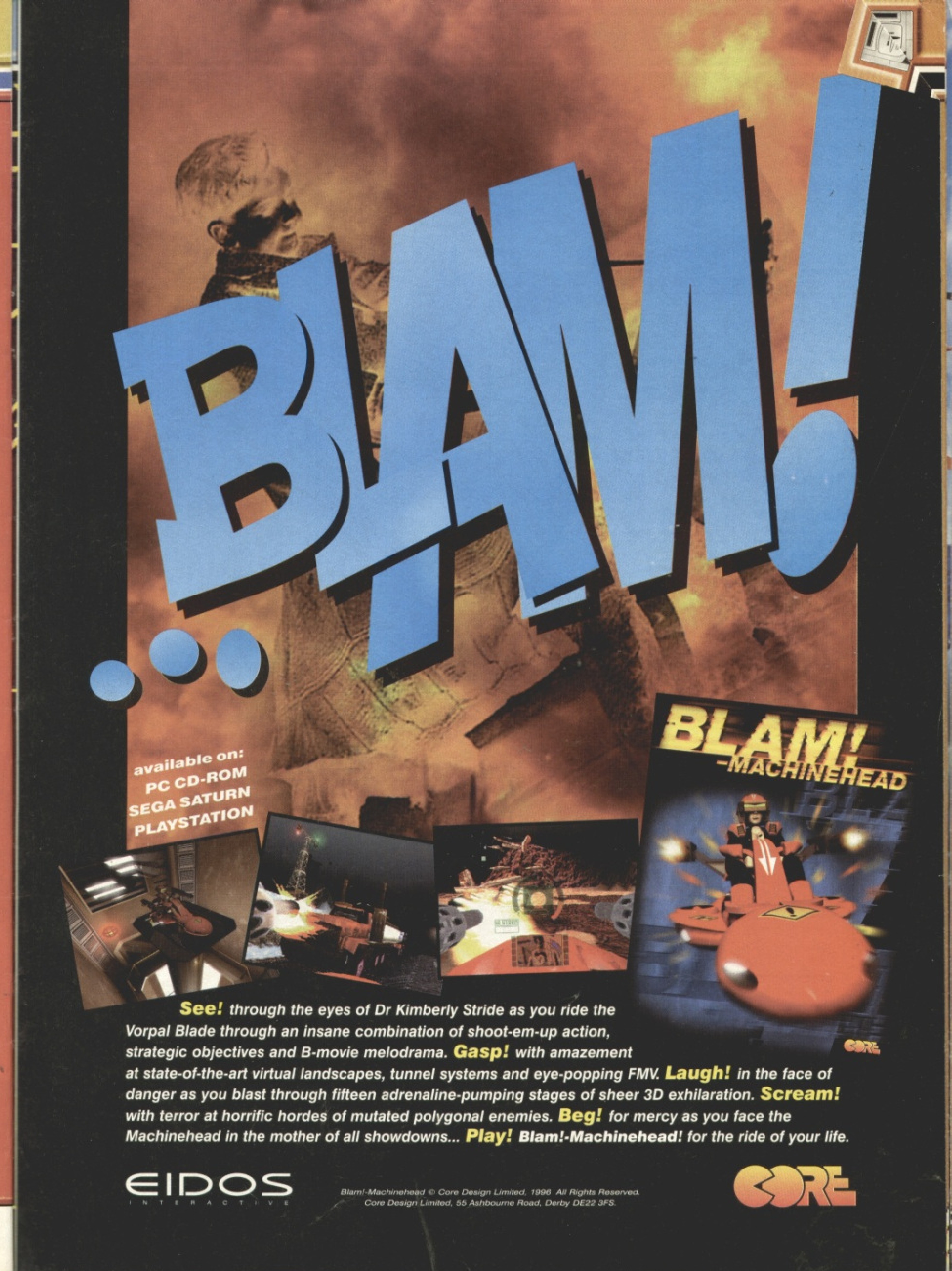
LASTABILITY 90

▲ H.U.G.E levels, and there's Chaos Emeralds to think about.
▼ It may be a tad easy for experienced gamers.

OVERALL

What's that, from inside the Megadrive coffin? Is that ... breathing? My God, it's still alive! Quick get it out! Get it out!

92


BLAM!...
available on:
PC CD-ROM
SEGA SATURN
PLAYSTATION
BLAM!
-MACHINEHEAD
CORE
See! through the eyes of Dr Kimberly Stride as you ride the Vorpal Blade through an insane combination of shoot-em-up action, strategic objectives and B-movie melodrama. Gasp! with amazement at state-of-the-art virtual landscapes, tunnel systems and eye-popping FMV. Laugh! in the face of danger as you blast through fifteen adrenaline-pumping stages of sheer 3D exhilaration. Scream! with terror at horrific hordes of mutated polygonal enemies. Beg! for mercy as you face the Machinehead in the mother of all showdowns... Play! Blam!-Machinehead! for the ride of your life.
EIDOS
INTERACTIVE
Blam!-Machinehead © Core Design Limited, 1996 All Rights Reserved.
Core Design Limited, 55 Ashbourne Road, Derby DE22 3FS.
CORE

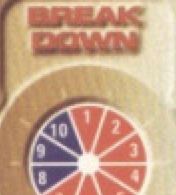
FIGHTING VIPERS

Can it be less than two years ago we were all agog at Virtua Fighter? Now we are beginning to take Saturn games of the standard of Sega Rally for granted. Even so, no-one was quite sure what AM2 would make of their own dynamite one-on-one 3D beat 'em up, Fighting Vipers. Could the Saturn handle even the gameplay, let alone the graphics?
The Japanese version reveals all — and all is what's there — everything apart from removal of the background animations. This is more than made up for by some outrageous features revealed in Pandora's Box fashion.



BY	SEGA (AM2)
RELEASE	NOVEMBER
PRICE	£49.99
GAME TYPE	BEAT 'EM UP

BREAK DOWN



ORIGINALITY

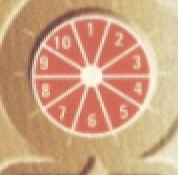
CHALLENGE



ACTION



STRATEGY



REFLEXES

1-2 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
INFINITE

SKILL LEVELS
5

RESPONSIVENESS
INCREDIBLE!

ORIGIN

AM2 convert their own Sega Model 2 coin-op, itself an overhaul of the VF2 principle.

GAME AIM

Defeat, nay demolish, your nine other opponents in a visceral battle.

BEAT THIS



10 MINUTES HYPER MODE





FANGS FOR THE MEMORY

How many times have you whacked a mate's ass on VF2 and wished you could save it to humiliate him at a future date? On Fighting Vipers you CAN! If you happen to have that once-in-a-lunchtime resounding victory, press the L button and the preceding round can be saved into system or cartridge memory, complete with date and time.





GET BIZZY WITH THE FIZZY

Witness the antics of Fighting Vipers celebrity character, Pepsiman. Steely like Dural, but decked out in the soft drink livery, he pops up every so often to challenge you (the music here is hilarious). Sadly Sega UK want to deprive us of Pepsiman for the PAL version and replace him with a bland, uncommercial character. But it won't be the same, fizzy pop fans.

FIGHTING VIPERS

SNAKEBITE

As detailed in our previews, the action of Fighting Vipers is wild enough, but Hyper mode, revealed after your first completion, makes it demonic. In Hyper mode you can strip off all your armour quickly and go into 'custom combo mode'. There is now no limit to the number of moves you can stream into sequence, letting you unleash a furious battery. You can also dodge 3-D style. Hyper mode offers a complete change of pace and style.

RATTLE AND HUM

The Training Mode is comprehensive. Practice against computer drones who stand, move, crouch according to one of eight types. A moves list becomes available with instructions on how to perform each. A move is marked off once successfully performed, with a surprise if you bother to do the lot.

ONCE BITTEN

Once you complete the game, rendered artwork of the character you played with becomes available on the options screen.

COMMENT


DAN

Hats off to AM2 for once again producing an astounding conversion of a top-of-the-range arcade machine. Every time we think we've seen all the Saturn is capable of, along comes Sega to prove otherwise. But Fighting Vipers is more than just a technical marvel - it's a brilliant game in its own right. While obviously owing a huge debt to VF2, a more accessible control system makes Fighting Vipers a lot easier to get to grips with, while the sharp, staccato nature of the fighting makes the gameplay seen even more brutal. Add to that the wealth of Saturn only extras and Fighting Vipers becomes an essential purchase.

COMMENT


GUS

Yes! Yes! Yes! Since Fighting Vipers has come in I've been mad for it, even if I was never as good at VF2 as some others. Fighting Vipers appeals to me more immediately than VF2 because the characters are groovier, the action faster and more vicious. All the added features listed here (and there are more) came as a great surprise, and by any valid console comparision, the graphics and sound are awesome. Even if you have Virtua Fighter 2, in fact especially if you have VF2, you must have this game.

GRAPHICS — 93

▲Fantastic scenery with the imposing trademark walls.

▼The characters are lower resolution than VF2 but look better. Stunning replays.

ANIMATION — 94

▲The movement is so incredibly detailed, you take it for granted until you see one of Raxel's throws or a close-up replay.

MUSIC — 90



▲Tokio's airport scene music is classic, as is Grace's skate pop.

▼The rock stuff lends the game its grungy feel.

EFFECTS — 91



▲Loads of grunting and groaning and the sickening sound of rattling steel.

▼Really heavy armour-busting impact noises.

PLAYABILITY — 96



▲More violent and more instantly attractive than VF2.

▼The incredible speed is mixed with smart, sophisticated combat gameplay.

LASTABILITY — 92

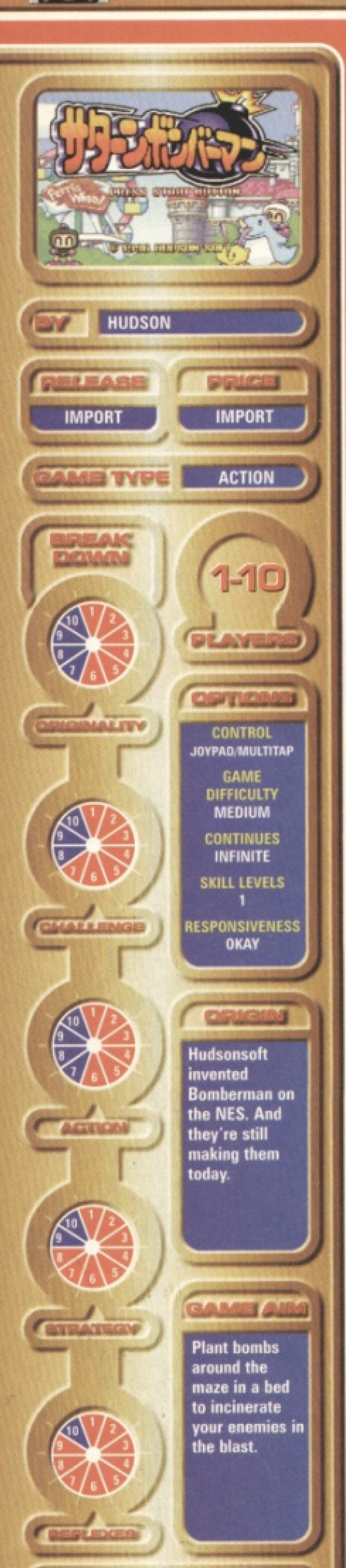


▲A huge array of modes, Playback, hidden characters and costumes, time records and ultra-hard opponents.

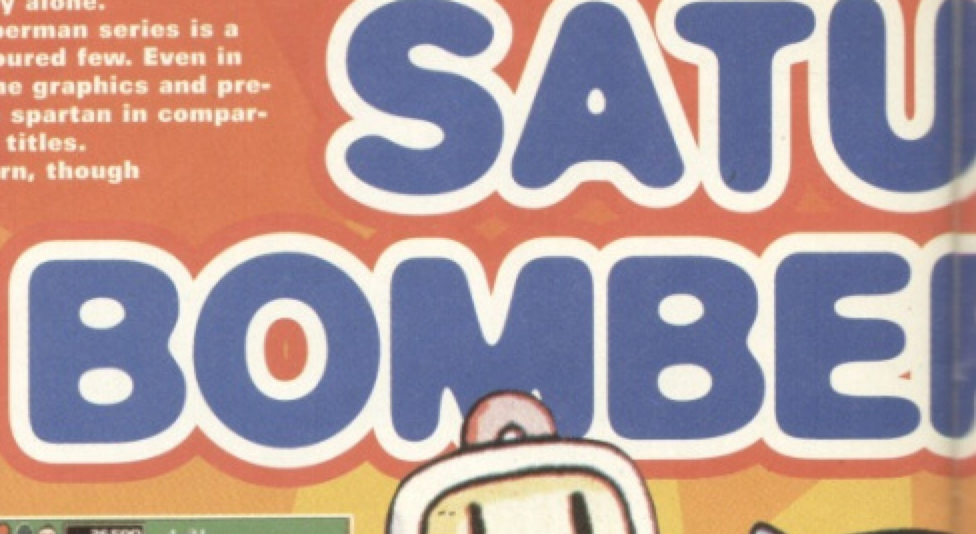
OVERALL

It could be a huge struggle to work out which is best: 'Vipers or Fighter. Another AM2 game slithers into history.





SATURN BOMBERMAN



A few, fortunate games build their reputations on gameplay alone. Hudsonsoft's Bomberman series is a portion of that favoured few. Even in its earliest days, the graphics and presentation of Bomberman were spartan in comparison with other Gameboy/NES titles. And it's the same on the Saturn, though Bomberman has come of age in terms of complexity and ingenuity. Still, some people unacquainted with the gameplay may need guidance on why, on this occasion, 2-D triumphs.

Mad hippos, Japanese gardens, I don't know.

MASTER BLASTER

Bomberman's game concept is singular — plant bombs. Every bomb your midget bomber drops will explode seconds later, in horizontal and vertical blast zones, according to the open space around it. This effect is put to use to destroy walls and enemies, and in the multi-player game, other players. Of course, the blast does not discriminate, so you could fall victim to your own device.





COMMENT



GUS

All that's strong and all that's weak about Bomberman is contained herein. Short of attempting some kind of 3D debacle, you can't really expect Hudsonsoft to do much more with the concept. The reason to buy Bomberman is the multiplayer mode. Two player is okay, get above that and its excellent stuff that you'll come back to time and again because it's easy to set up and play for 10 minutes or an hour. The single player game is not nearly so compulsive, but the version here is as varied as possible. Even the infinite continues don't spoil a very challenging lone mode.



URN ERMAN

COMMENT



DAN

Bomberman is, was, and always will be a multiplayer game. No matter how much effort Hudsonsoft put into the one player 'quest' mode, it will always be seen as a distraction from the real deal: Tournament Mode! Four player Bomberman is an essential experience for anyone with an interest in games, and provided you have four pads, a multitap and four mates its a brilliant way to spend an evening. 10 player Bomberman is even more hectic, though I doubt that most of you will have the resources. If you're going to make the most of the multiplayer option, then Saturn Bomberman is an essential purchase.

GANG BANG

Only a nutcase would prefer Bomberman's story mode to the legendary multi-player game. This takes place on a simple, themed maze, with human players attempting to bomb each other out of the game. It's fast, furious and incredible fun. Bomberman Saturn takes it to ridiculous levels by allowing TEN players at once. You need ten joypads, two multi-taps and a minibus.





HAND SHANDY

The consolation for lone players is that this is the most imaginative Story Mode Bomberman has ever had. Dozens of levels, all linked, graphically themed and with lots of little features unique to a particular level. The objective is to destroy the pillars, and acquire enough powers to take on the end-of-level boss.

THE COLLECTOR

Single bombs are pretty unexciting, but Bomberman offers the widest imaginable range of empowering features, hidden as little icons, released when a part of the wall is destroyed. If you know Bomberman, the Saturn version has all previous powers plus some. If you don't, peruse this selection:



BOMB

You can lay an additional bomb for every bomb icon you collect.



FLAME

The blast area for each bomb is increased with each of these.



LEG

You can kick your bombs along the passages.



POWER

Power bombs unleash an awesome explosion.



SKULL

Multi-player only. Makes the player act erratically or contract bomb diaorrhea!



SKATE

Go faster.



VEST

Heralds a period of invincibility.

EGG

hatches one of five dinosaurs, each with a custom power of their own.

GRAPHICS 80

▲The epitome of all things miniature and cute. Lovely themed areas in the story mode.

▼Titchy, flat and not very next gen.

ANIMATION 62





▼Hardly noticeable on the game figures — they're too small. The game's main feature is speed.

MUSIC 90

▲The composer(s) have let their imagination go wild, with trip-hop-pop arrangements that drive the game forward.

EFFECTS 78

▲Boom, bang-a-bang.

PLAYABILITY 86



▲Multi-player is classic gameplay.

▼Single player mode is an acquired taste.

LASTABILITY 81

▲If you have mates, you have months of fun ahead.

▼If you don't, you don't deserve to have fun, do ya?

OVERALL

The best version of Bomberman there has ever been. That can't be a bad thing.



85

actua Golf



BY: SEGA

RELEASE: OCTOBER

PRICE: £44.99

GAME TYPE: GOLF SIM

BREAK DOWN

1-4 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

OPTIONS

CONTROL JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY MEDIUM

CONTINUES RAM SAVE

SKILL LEVELS 2

RESPONSIVENESS FINE

CHALLENGE



ORIGIN

A new golf game engine, nominally part of Gremlin's 'Actua' sports series.

ACTION

STRATEGY

GAME AIM

Same as any golf game. Knock a ball from tee to hole in as few strokes as possible.

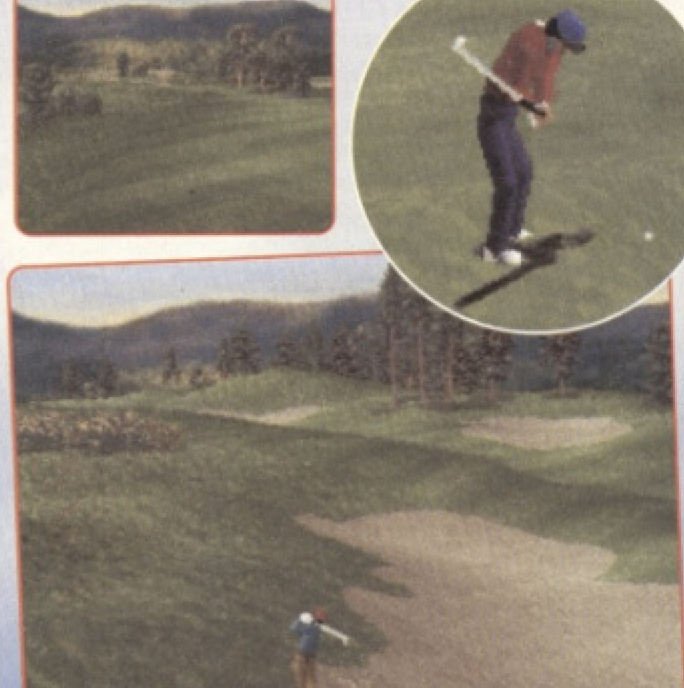
REFLEXES

BEAT THIS

7TH (TRACK 1, NORMAL SETTING)

Few games offer an equal chance for humilation as golf. While your partners might drive effortlessly, chip confidently and putt with devastating accuracy, you might hook and slice your way to bogeys of Bart Simpson proportions.

Still, millions of console owners who wouldn't be seen dead with a copy of Fighting Vipers (and thousands who would) queue up to buy the latest attempt to render the ancient game in digital form. Despite many of them looking much of a muchness, and having suspiciously similar control methods, some pitch closer to the flag than others. Actua Golf falls into this category.



ARC-E-OLOGY

Actua Golf simplifies the main tactical aspect of the golf game – aiming for the hole – with an arc. This transparent curve shows the ideal path of the ball when hit with the selected club (making no allowance for wind). This is not entirely new, but Actua allows you to change the viewing angle so you can see exactly where the arc will land. This feature is useful where the ball will land out of view of the tee, as you can make adjustments for slopes. You can also use the arc to create a marker which indicates when you should stop your swing. But this is only offered in Amateur mode.

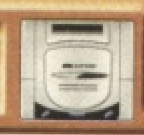


EYE BALLED

You could never miss any action in Actua Golf. Your preparation can be watched from any of a dozen angles, your shot is relayed from an equal number of dramatic positions. These include panning, tracking, reverse, static and ball cam shots. You can mix these randomly by selecting 'Intellicam'. The replay option offers a fresh set of viewing perspectives, including split angle replays.







...ua GOLF

PROFESSIONAL TOUCH

Actua's attention to detail is a first in the genre. The programmers have thought enough to show mundane but lifelike aspects, like the golfers removing their balls after sinking a putt. They also show reactions on the green, willing a tense putt to the mark. The landscapes show remarkable detail, even down to independently moving shadows.



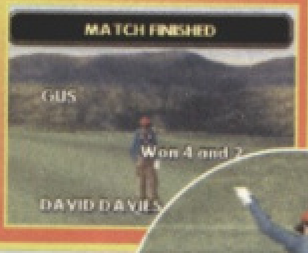




TASTY FOURSOME

As many sensible play options as you would want are offered; practice from 1-4 players, matchplay (2 players), strokeplay (2-4 players), skins (2 players) Foursome and Fourballs, all leading to the tournament option.













COMMENT

GUS

Games constantly improve, and sometime someone will improve on this, but Actua Golf is without doubt the best golf game on the Saturn, and by some margin. Finally, programmers who show some real interest in the game with their work, which seems to be assembled from a golfer's mind. The basic control method – stop a power bar twice – is the same as every other, but the flexibility in setting up your shot with the minimal recourse to menus, makes it easy and painless to perform chips onto the green, or draw the ball effectively. Because you can do this easily, you're more likely to bother, unlike most other golf games. The excellent visuals and commentary all add, of course, and again, these have no peer on Saturn. Two courses is not ideal for our greedy gamesters here, but there may be follow-up course discs. In the meantime, golf gamers should not hesitate to buy Actua.



COMMENT

MARCUS

I was a big advocate of Velora Valley Golf, but the only golf game worth buying for Saturn has now been bettered in impressive fashion. A detailed simulation (as opposed to Velora's fantasy golf) Actua bristles with options and graphics that distinguish this is a golfer's golf game. It's not perfect – the usually impressive commentary occasionally gets muddled, especially when there are a number of commentators – but this really is the most sumptuous golf game I've ever seen. An essential purchase for fans.

GRAPHICS 86

▲Detailed, lush courses that are a pleasure to play on with a sensible and wide range of perspectives.
▼Occasional pixelling of very close landscape features.



ANIMATION 84

▲The moving camera offers good and occasionally spectacular views of your shots. The golfer's movement is also very good.



MUSIC 51

▼Very little music apart from a bizarre elevator ditty on the title screen.



EFFECTS 85

▲Not one but three commentaries, the best being from Peter Alliss. You can also mix these for a commentary overdose.
▼The swing and 'whack' and whistle of the ball sounds are not so hot.



PLAYABILITY 93

▲Easier to play, with more depth and subtletly than any other golf game, and more interesting courses.

LASTABILITY 89

▲The professional mode pushes players again once they've developed their confidence in Amateur status.
▼36 holes is probably 18 too few.

OVERALL

Actua outdrives everything on the Saturn range. The leader in its field.

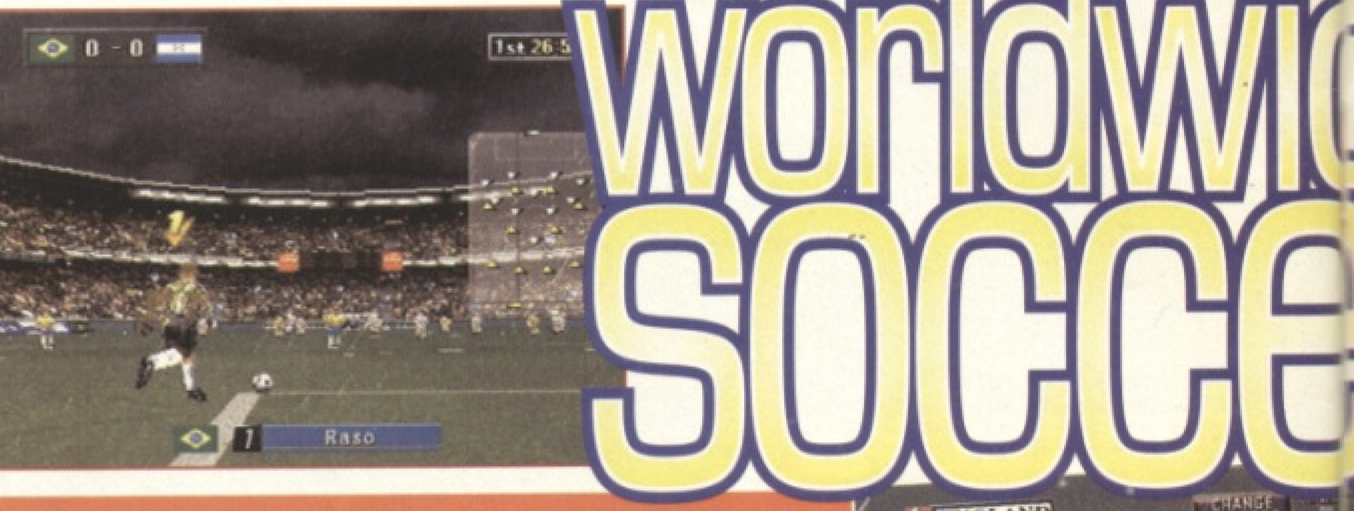


worldwide SOCCER



The Japanese hate to be second best at anything, and their 'knob' status at all things football is clearly one they would like to change. And it is changing. Top signings for the J-League, including 'smiling' Gary Lineker and a recent shock victory over Brazil at the Olympics go some way to establishing them as the top nation in Asia.

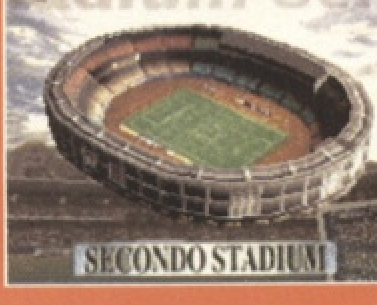
Jap soccer games have been another area of doubt. Smugly, we've rested on the laurels of our own Sensible Soccer, Euro '96, Striker, whilst ridiculing last year's ill-begotten Victory Goal. But with Worldwide Soccer '97, Sega have snuck up on our soccer games like a lone San Marino striker on a complacent English defence.



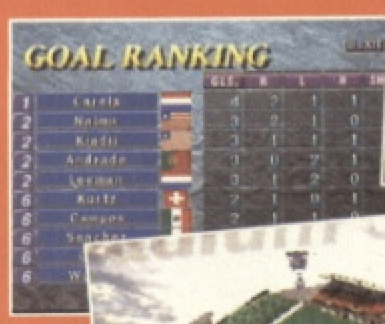
POSITION YOUR PIECES

Worldwide Soccer gives you a remarkable ability to influence the actions of the computer-controlled players in realtime, through 'coaching'. The Y and Z buttons combine to offer three directives to your players – to mark other players, move into space upfield, even to create a sneaky offside trap – bring your defenders forward to blunt an attack.





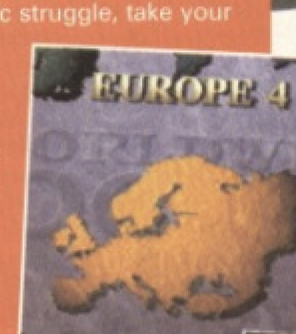






TROPHY MONDO

All Worldwide's 48 team sides are national, with the main tournament a replica of the World Cup. To embark on this epic struggle, take your side through territorial qualifiers in Europe, Nth. America, Sth. America, Asia and Africa. It looks like the programmers have given genuine attributes to the skills of the teams – note the aiming precision of the Germans and the wild speed of Cameroon.











Magnifiucent reaction save there from the Scotland goalie. Must be all the practice he gets.

SHEAR BRILLIANCE

The single aspect that should persuade thousands of Saturn owners to snap up Worldwide is the amazing animation. Players are capable of a host of tricks which they perform with the panache of a Dalgleish, a Keegan, a Pele or a Shearer. The tumbles and tackles look recklessly realistic, the ball control inspired and skilful.

In situations like these it's best just to tonk it, innit?



Coulthard applies her highly developed ducking and diving skills honed at MMS.



At half time the crowd are entertained by an exhibition of celebrity break dancing.



If Gary Bloom says 'he's making some space in midfield' once more, I'm gonna...

COMMENT



GUS

Almost everyone who has played Worldwide Soccer has been blown away by it. Rarely do sports games get the sort of seal of approval it has enjoyed, as everyone has a different idea of what's the most important aspect of a sport. Worldwide offers graphic brilliance and outstanding playability in equal measure. The pace, tension and pressure of the game are just right, with enough space on the field to play a tactical game. It's also the most enjoyable Saturn soccer game to play alone, with smart but fallible CPU sides. You really must buy this title, even if you have every other football game known to man.

COMMENT



MARCUS

With Worldwide Soccer 97 Sega set out to create the definative Soccer sim and guess what? That's just what they've done. SWS 97 is a revelation in sports simulations, perfectly balancing unprecedented realism with intuitive gameplay. It looks like nothing you've ever seen before, plays like nothing you've ever played before, and offers more depth then a dozen Fifa's. This is, without a doubt, the finest footie game I've ever played, and that includes Sensible Soccer and Adidas Power Soccer. The proof of the pudding is in the eating and SWS 97 has football pie all over its shirt. Goaaal!

GRAPHICS — 93

▲Impressive stadiums, with flags of the competing nations animated in the crowd. Sensible, playable camera positions.

ANIMATION — 93

▲Mint player animation making the sprites more like real people than ever before. Detail and drama with every exertion.

MUSIC — 72

▲Follows the current vogue for cheesy menu music.
▼The music in-game adds very little.

EFFECTS — 84

▲The commentary by Gary Bloom has a good stab at analysing the action.
▼Too much repetition of phrases to make it work completely.

PLAYABILITY — 94

▲ Incredibly easy to pick up and begin playing. As much fun in one-player as with 2, 3 or 4. It has the elusive 'feel' factor sports fans know about.

LASTABILITY — 93

▲ The range of functions, 'special moves' and tactical elements is a pukka way of maintaining appeal. Good tournament difficulty structure.

OVERALL

Strength and beauty combine in the best football game you're likely to see before the end of this season.



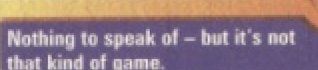
Disney Pinocchio

RELEASE: ....OCTOBER	MEG:.............................. 24
PLAYERS:.........................1	PRICE:.............................. TBA
BY: ....SEGA	GAME TYPE:... PLATFORM



















GRAPHICS 82 – The characters look great, but the backgrounds are sometimes a bit bland.

EFFECTS 75 – Nothing to speak of – but it's not that kind of game.

ANIMATION 84 – Pinocchio and Jiminy bounce around the screen in impressive detail.

PLAYABILITY 83 – Fun, but slightly slow moving.

MUSIC 77 – Grating versions of the songs from the film.

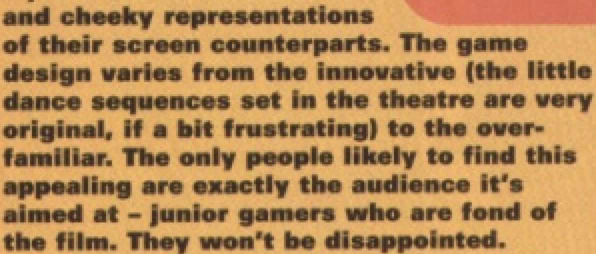
LASTABILITY 79 – This won't present much of a challenge to seasoned gamers.

OVERALL 82 – A modest platformer with only a few nice touches – fun for fans.

He's the little wooden guy with the floppy quiff. His dad's the elderly toymaker and his best mate is a talking grasshopper. Yup, it's Pinocchio and it's Disney time on the Megadrive again.

In this new slab of celluloid-inspired platform fun our wooden hero's adventures closely follow the plot of the film. Which, incredibly, no-one round here seems to have seen. But he goes to school, has some underwater fun, visits the funfair and gets swallowed by a whale. All sounds fairly plausible to us. Each level is linked by a story book detailing Pinocchio's adventures as he runs away from home and tries to avoid getting shredded into match wood by various ne'erdowells. Altogether now..."When you wish upon a star, makes no difference who you are..."

COMMENT



MARCUS

Yes, we've seen it all before, yes, it's unbearably cute, no, there's absolutely no opportunity to machine gun anything whatsoever. Right, now we've got all that out of the way, what's Pinocchio actually like? It looks very bright and tidy, and the principal characters are faithful and cheeky representations of their screen counterparts. The game design varies from the innovative (the little dance sequences set in the theatre are very original, if a bit frustrating) to the over-familiar. The only people likely to find this appealing are exactly the audience it's aimed at – junior gamers who are fond of the film. They won't be disappointed.

COMMENT

DAN

I'm afraid I don't feel quite as forgiving towards Pinocchio as Marcus does. While it's hardly an offensive piece of software, I'm sick of seeing my favourite Disney movies turned into average platform romps. There are some nice touches, such as the game following the movie's plot, and being able to control Jiminy Cricket on one level, but I wouldn't have it in the house. While I can accept that this game is aimed at a younger audience, I can't really believe that anyone buying a new full price Megadrive game would choose this over Sonic 3D. Sorry.

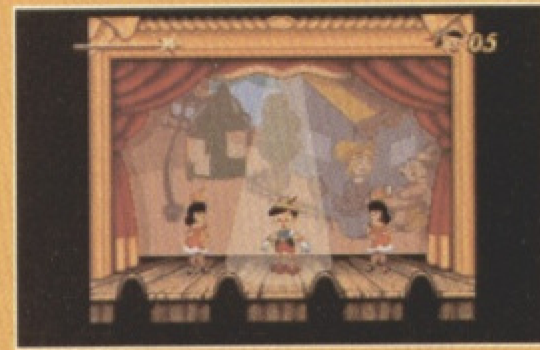


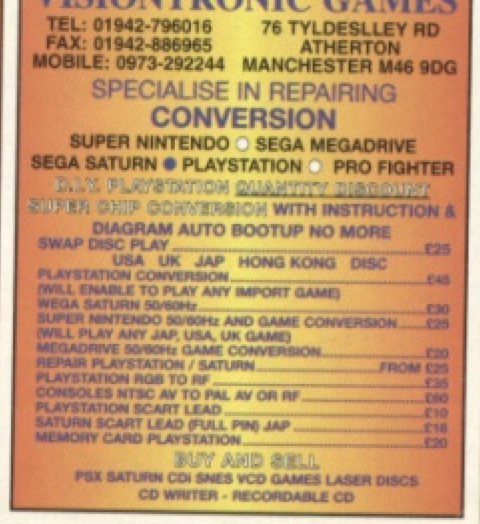


PANIC PUPPET

As well as a mixed bag of game styles there are a couple of really unusual levels – one where you control Jiminy cricket and have to use your umbrella to swat marauding moths and another where Pinocchio is the star attraction in a little theatre. You can only progress to the next level by exactly copying the moves of your various partners, whether they be ballet dancers or whirling Cossacks. Succeed and you'll get a round of applause – fail and you'll get pelted with tomatoes!







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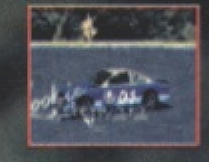


Destruction Derby is the closest thing to a drive 'em up you are going to see on the Saturn this year. Racing your clapped-out saloon is almost incidental to forcing other cars into the crash barriers lining the dirt tracks laid out in five vaguely American locations.

Saturn owners are hardly begging for racing games, with a steady stream since Daytona last year, from the serious (Sega Rally, Wipeout) to the silly (Road Rash, Street Racer) and now something in between.



DESTRUCTION DERBY





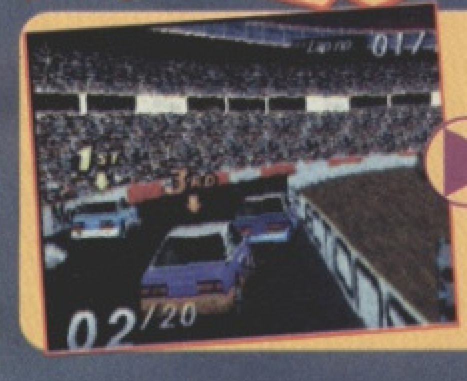


CROSS YOUR FINGERS

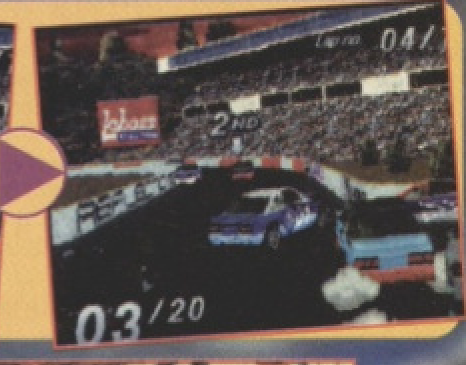
Some of the course layouts make you play the automobile equivalent of chicken, as the layout intersects itself. This makes it all too easy to collide with traffic coming from a right-angle, sending you careering down the wrong path. Although this is virtually unavoidable, the crashes look excellent.



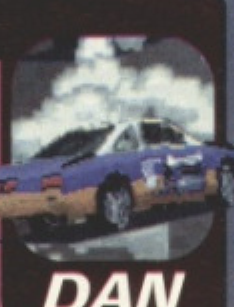








COMMENT



DAN

I'm starting to wonder whether these Saturn Psygnosis conversions are such a good idea after all. Games like Wipe Out and Destruction Derby were designed to show off the PlayStation hardware, and with a substandard conversion like this, it does the inverse for the Saturn. That said, Destruction Derby was never a brilliant game in the first place. Sure smashing other cars up is fun for a while, but the limited game mechanics and narrow tracks keep the game moving at a snail's pace when compared to 'legit' racers like Sega Rally. My advice: wait for Daytona CCE. Its going to be hot!

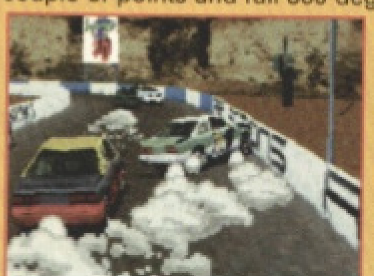
EDITED HIGHLIGHTS

The replay feature is very watchable, as it lets you construct a set of custom viewing angles from which to review a race/derby. It's very easy to use and not time consuming to set up an awesome sequence. There's no screen litter of scores or times either.



PENALTY POINTS

Metal grinds against metal – the damage is permanent. Taking first place in a Destruction Derby race is only half of it. Another way to score points is to force other cars out of the race. Heavy impacts are rewarded with 'Race Points', with a minor nudge getting a couple of points and full 360 degree spins taking a whopping eight. A diagram in the bottom right shows damage points around your car. It is possible to get hauled out of the race for sustaining too much damage.



COMMENT



GUS

I was hoping for a conversion of the standard of Wipeout, but for whatever reason, Destruction Derby falls short. The original game had some shortcomings in the longevity department, and was all a bit flat. That said, the nature of the game is different to most other racers and the physics which make the cars crash so spectacularly must be very clever. I also had a fair amount of fun with the Derby and replay options. The most obvious weakness is the graphics — appalling clipping, occasional jerkiness and slowdown and regular glitching make this fall well below the cosmetic standard of most Saturn games.

DERBY AND JOAN

Not really a race but a fight to the death. The twenty cars have a massed motor rumble in a 'bowl' arena — a Destruction Derby. The secret for high points and good placings is to spread the damage around your car and survive as long as possible.

OOH... ME PILES

Squeezing twenty cars onto tracks this narrow is a recipe for gridlock. The pile-ups look great, but can take you out of contention if you get stuck in the centre.

GRAPHICS — 76

▲The cars are nice, and there's lots going on in any race.

▼low resolution and blocky backgrounds.

ANIMATION — 68

▲Spectacular crashes occuring all the time.

▼Very unpolished 3D. Background features appear from nowhere.



MUSIC — 77

▲Intriguing mix of cheese and dance. Drivetime stuff.

EFFECTS — 74

▲The characters' exclamations are funny.

▼The commentator is repetitive. No good smashing noises.

PLAYABILITY — 69

▲The destructive, chaotic element lends DD a distinctive and original appeal.

▼The course are flat and simple.

LASTABILITY — 70

▲The Derby is always good for a laugh.

▼Once you have the measure of the race, it's challenge and appeal wanes.

OVERALL

An immaculate conversion might have made this a contender. But with the company it keeps, it's just an also-ran.

69

REAL BOUT

A small, but dedicated group of game fans keep the SNK torch alight here in blighty, whereas in Japan the company behind NEO GEO is taken rather more seriously.

SNK are something of a curiosity. While everyone and his processor have stampeded into 3D polygon games and new consoles, they keep churning out derivative beat 'em ups for an spellbound audience of King of Fighters, Art of Fighting, Fatal Fury and Samurai Shodown fans. However, the respect with which they are held goes some way to explaining why Sega licensed them to convert these very games with an expensive ROM cart required as well as a CD.

Real Bout is an unreconstructed SNK game of the old school. Defenders would argue that a lot of the features that make their way into Capcom beat 'em ups are developed in SNK's games first. But what about Real Bout?

CART ON TOP

Real Bout is the second game SNK have produced which uses a cartridge with the CD. Unlike King of Fighter '95 which used ROM, this is a RAM cartridge that uploads further data from the disc. The initial outlay is high for this package, but you should be able to use the RAM

PLANE CRAZY

The fighting action takes place on three separate planes; background, mid and foreground. A separate button on the pad controls mpvement between the planes for dodging attacks. You can attack across planes with diagonal special moves.



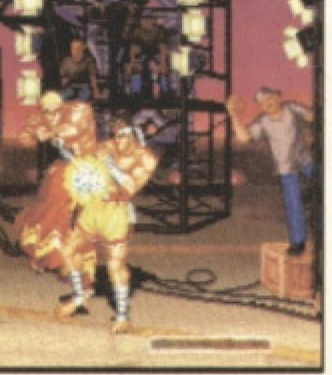
KNOW NO BOUNDS

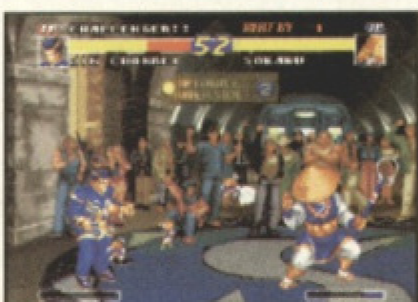
Taking the 'ring out' idea from 3D fighters, Real Bout allows you to push your opponent into an instant forfeiting out-of-bounds position. But there's normally something else in the way, so player's must propel their quarry through these barriers with a flurry of special attacks.



OLD PROS

If you've played previous SNK fighting games you'll recognise characters like the Bogard brothers, Geese Howard, Joe Higashi and Mai Shiranui.





RELEASE: ....IMPORT
PLAYERS:....................1-2
BY: ....SNK

PRICE:........ IMPORT (STEEP)
GAME TYPE. BEAT 'EM UP

GRAPHICS 82

High level of detail, but not the highest level of resolution.

EFFECTS 68

The samples sound crude.

ANIMATION 76

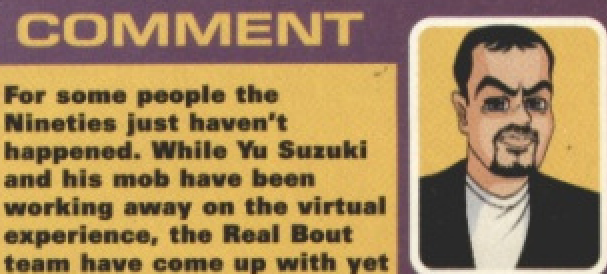
Nothing like the smoothness of Capcom's.

PLAYABILITY 75
Nothing to write home about, but plenty of moves.

MUSIC 84

A pleasantly weird array of signature tunes varying between characters.

LASTABILITY 70
About as collectable as locomotive numbers.

OVERALL 73

Somebody will buy this whatever we say, so why say anything?

COMMENT

MARCUS

For some people the Nineties just haven't happened. While Yu Suzuki and his mob have been working away on the virtual experience, the Real Bout team have come up with yet another 2-D beat 'em up. The feature, and is some ways the problem with SNK beat 'em ups is they don't have the same cool Nippon style of Capcom's Streetfighter series, or the guts of the Mortal Kombat games. They're something in between, and the features that Real Bout has which will appeal to the ultra-NEO GEO enthusiast will be lost on 90% of gamesplayers.

COMMENT


GUS

I've no particular fetish for SNK games, and I don't think the vast majority of gamers do. At their best, they're well crafted beat 'em ups; at worst boring piles of crap. To my mind, this improves on the much overrated King of Fighters, whilst coming nowhere near the classiness of the recent Capcom games. You don't need Real Bout.

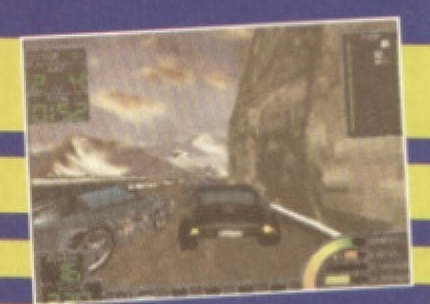


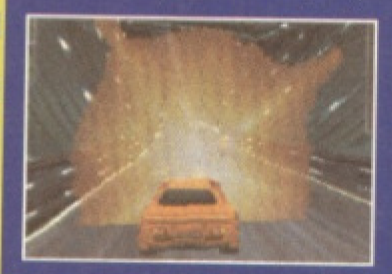
IMPACT RACING

It doesn't seem to be enough to push a car around a track any more – punters demand the extra thrills of rally driving (Sega Rally), digi-babes (Highway 2000) and the County Rangers (Need For Speed) to spice up their road rage. JVC have risen to the challenge with Impact Racing, a driving/shoot 'em up hybrid that sees you haring around a number of courses, blowing away the traffic with everything from lasers to heat-seeking missiles and mines. The courses range from a familiar urban landscape to a snowy track and, erm, deep space. Full marks for originality at least. There's a wide variety of high-powered cars, an armory of weaponry and plenty of power-ups for both to pick up on the way. Good scores are rewarded with the chance to soup up your car with laser cannons and smart bombs, all of which can be activated against your opponents. So just be careful next time you go for those Opal Fruits in the glove compartment...

ROAD HAZARDS

Clearing each level depends on maintaining energy/armour levels and driving extremely fast. If you destroy each course's target number of cars then you'll get a tunnel-bound bonus stage before you tackle the course. Destroy a certain number of cars with the bonus level's time limit and you'll be rewarded with a new piece of weaponry.





RELEASE: ....NOVEMBER	PRICE:........................ £44
PLAYERS:........................1	GAME TYPE:...... DRIVING/SHOOT 'EM UP
BY: ....JVC	











Category	Score	Comment
GRAPHICS	87	Not as busy as other driving games, but a lot more imaginative.
EFFECTS	85	The more exotic weapons are very impressive.
ANIMATION	85	Extremely smooth and fast.
PLAYABILITY	81	Great driving game, good shoot 'em up.
MUSIC	84	Above average drive-time tunes.
LASTABILITY	73	There are only three basic courses, and they could be longer.

OVERALL 80
A compelling mix of game genres. Impact Racing is a top notch novelty racer.

COMMENT



GUS

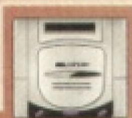
Marcus and I had to majorly disagree on something before he left, and this is it. Why he holds a light up for Impact Racing is beyond me. If I want a racer I get Sega Rally, if I want a shoot 'em up, I get, well anything apart from Impact Racing. The graphics, granted, are pretty silky, but the settings (bar space) look like an A-road through the Pennines. Neverthelees, it appeals to some.

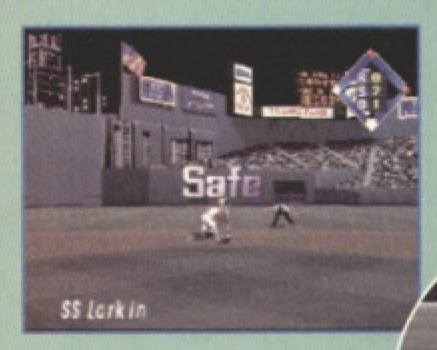
COMMENT

MARCUS

With success dependant on a combination of skilful driving and shooting accuracy, Impact Racing is a genuine multi-genre game that does pretty well on both scores. Impact Racing's graphics are fast and smooth – at least on a par with Need For Speed – but it usually achieves this with high-walled courses and cliff faces that limit the trackside detail. The short cuts don't register once you're into the game, although the limitations of the courses and the repetition in gameplay are slightly off-putting. Overall, this isn't in the premier league of racing games, but I've been having a lot of fun playing it.







RELEASE: ....NOVEMBER	MEG:..............................CD
PLAYERS:....................1-2	PRICE:.................... £44.99
BY: ....SEGA	GAME TYPE:.... BASEBALL

GRAPHICS 87
Stadiums fall apart a bit close-up but the players are very detailed.

EFFECTS 81
Options noises are good, but the in-game stuff could have been beefier.



ANIMATION 82
Batting and running is very fluid, and personalised to each player.



PLAYABILITY 84
It's a good game of baseball, with nearly all the trimmings.



MUSIC 74
The horribly weedy organ music is back.



LASTABILITY 80
There's a lot to get into here – it's worth exploring.



OVERALL 83
The best baseball game yet is flawed but fun.

World Series Baseball II

Baseball bats aren't just useful for inflicting grievous bodily harm on innocent passers-by and for hiding behind pub bars ("Just in case of aggro, know what I mean?"). They're quite handy for America's favourite sport.

Baseball is basically rounders played by men wearing tight trousers and funny little hats. Two teams of nine do battle on a diamond-shaped pitch. The defending team pitches a ball at the opposing batter who launches into a circuit of the diamond once he's hit the ball. He runs from base to base, scoring a point for a complete circuit. He can be interrupted by watchful fielders, who can retrieve or catch the ball, knocking him out. That's basically it, and it's pants to be honest. That's why no-one in this country plays it, why there are only a handful of US baseball games released here and why every time we review one of them we have to explain what baseball is.

COMMENT

MARCUS

I'm probably not best qualified to review a baseball game – I've got absolutely no interest in the sport – but I was quite impressed with World Series II. While it offers few significant improvements over the first World Series game, its clearest advantage over Acclaim's Frank Thomas Big Hurt is in the graphics department – the players, in particular, look good. The same old baseball problems are apparent though – unlike most simulations of football or tennis, you still get the impression that success is perhaps too reliant on initiating a series of pre-determined routines that you have too little control over. Better is surely to come – in the meantime, World Series II wins the league.

COMMENT

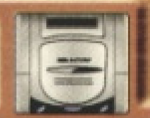


GUS

Last year's World Series Baseball was the best attempt yet at bringing the sport to console. In the meantime, a couple of other contenders have arrived, but none have bettered Sega's game, until this, merely an update of Sega's game. I struggle to see any radical new elements, only graphic tweaks and stat changes (which will surely be missed by all but a few diehard baseball fans in this country). A game designed only to excite fans of a peculiar sport, but accomplished despite that.

PLAY BALL!

World Series II positively bristles with more options and stats than you can shake a stick at. Five stadiums are recreated in impressive detail, and once you've chosen your venue you can select such variables as weather conditions or night-time games. In-game camera positions can be set to low, medium, high or random positions, while replays follow particularly spectacular action. Get bored of playing baseball and you can switch to an option that allows you to watch it instead with selected league highlights in high quality FMV.



The Three Dirty Dwarves in question come from inside the role-playing game of four imaginative kids who are being watched closely by Army Intelligence, as one of them has developed an inter-dimensional gate. This imaginary device sucks the dwarves into the 'real world' along with orc-ish mutants that threaten the stability of the United States from the ghettos of New York. The kids are nabbed by the army ane the dwarves have to save them by using kit found in Al's Sport Shop in the Bronx. Yes it is the silliest plot for a beat 'em up on the Saturn, but it does have three player action. So...

3 DIRTY DWARVES

RELEASE: ....JUNE	MEG:................................ 4
PLAYERS:.........................1	PRICE:.......................... TBA
BY: ....US GOLD	GAME TYPE:...... DRIVING

GRAPHICS  82
Pleasantly different chunky graphic style and large-scale sprites.

EFFECTS  71
The samples are not of a great quality.

ANIMATION  74
The dwarves move well and the background scaling is interesting.

PLAYABILITY  69
The three character select system is unique, the action relentless.

MUSIC  75
American, if that appeals to you.

LASTABILITY  66
Very hard, even with unlimited continues.

OVERALL  66
3DD Shoots itself in the foot early on, with grinding gameplay and limited scope for player expression.

CHANGING DAYS



The programmers have tried to vary Three Dirty Dwarves by mucking about with all kinds of gamestyles. Although the main thrust is 2-D Streets of Rage-style beat 'em uppery, there's 3-D sections, and single-screen stages playing like bonus rounds, mine carts etc.

TOOLED UP

Each character's weapons is employed in various ways during the street-fight. The simplest method is to bash enemies over the head with what you have to hand, but the weapons can be employed in more specialised ways.

BASEBALL BAT
Can whack home run-paced balls into the faces of your foes, and skilful players can launch a salvo of four at once.



FOOTBALL
Rolled along the ground to up-end anyone standing in your path, whilst disposing of most inanimate obstacles.

SHOTGUN
Fires off an unlimited supply of cartridges, one of which is enough to blow most creatures away.

THREESOMES!
The Dwarves get into action using a special attack power, and turn into a formidable scrum formation.

DREAM TEAM

The player selection works in a variety of mystifying ways. For a single-player game it's simple enough — you lead one dwarf and the others follow, with the option to switch control of the main character. Two players share the dwarfs, with a spare character selectable by either. Three players, naturally, take one. In any of these games, if all three dwarfs are stunned simultaneously, the game is over.



COMMENT



DAN

I'm one of the few people who actually likes scrolling beat 'em ups. Final Fight, Streets of Rage, Die Hard Arcade - they all get my adrenalin pumping. Unfortunately, 3DD commits the cardinal sin having both frustrating gameplay, AND a cripplingly narrow play field. The graphics are nicely detailed and smoothly animated, the sound is acceptable, and there are some clever ideas on the later levels. But at the end of a day, 3DD just isn't as satisfying as other genre entries. Save you cash for Die Hard.

COMMENT



GUS

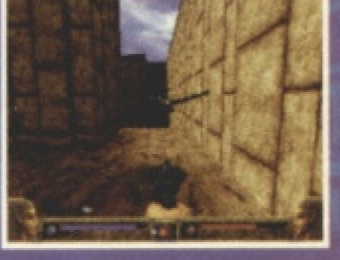
Three Dirty Dwarves thinks it's so funny, but there's little to smile about when you're trying to get to grips with the damn thing. 3DD is double-D difficult due to the narrowness of the actual playing area, which is little more than a mere path at the bottom of the screen. It's a shame, as some later levels have had a lot of work put into designing strange adversaries. The saving grace is the genuine variety in the Dwarves' fighting styles, pity they don't get the space to really work them.



EXHUMED
SEGA
£44.99
1 PLAYER
DOOM







Developers Lobotomy used the engine from the awesome PC game Duke Nukem 3D for Exhumed – a sophisticated Doom clone set in Egypt. You are Leigh Singer, an archaeologist exploring the tombs of Karnak, trying to prevent a demonic scheme to resurrect the body of King Rameses III. Exhumed has a lot going for it – the mechanics of the game are more advanced than competitors Doom and Alien Trilogy (you can look up and down), the sound effects are superb, and the game structure has more in common with RPGs than linear level-to-level shoot 'em ups. A central section is linked to a number of subsidiary 'hub' levels which you can visit to procure artefacts and weaponry that may become useful when you retrace your steps. The strength of Alien Trilogy's license may mean it eclipses Exhumed this Christmas, but Sega's Egyptian adventure really is the more absorbing game.







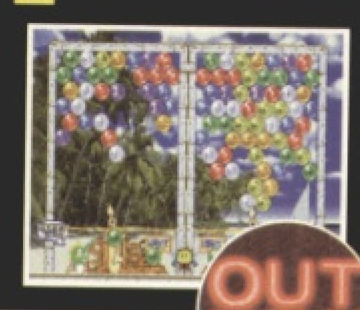




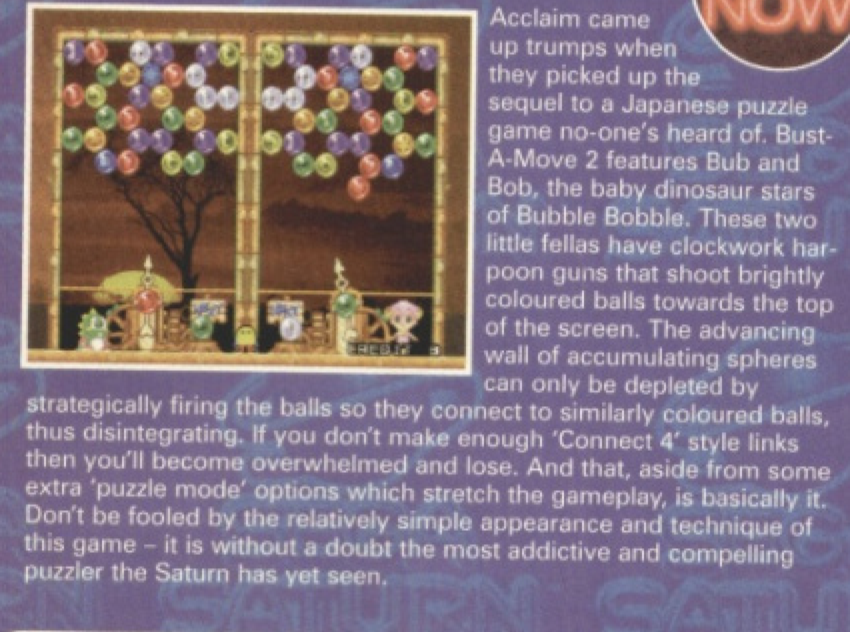
OVERALL 94

The most sophisticated and impressive Doom-style game on the Saturn this year. An essential purchase.

BUST-A-MOVE 2
ACCLAIM
£39.99
1-2 PLAYERS
PUZZLE







Acclaim came up trumps when they picked up the sequel to a Japanese puzzle game no-one's heard of. Bust-A-Move 2 features Bub and Bob, the baby dinosaur stars of Bubble Bobble. These two little fellas have clockwork harpoon guns that shoot brightly coloured balls towards the top of the screen. The advancing wall of accumulating spheres can only be depleted by strategically firing the balls so they connect to similarly coloured balls, thus disintegrating. If you don't make enough 'Connect 4' style links then you'll become overwhelmed and lose. And that, aside from some extra 'puzzle mode' options which stretch the gameplay, is basically it. Don't be fooled by the relatively simple appearance and technique of this game – it is without a doubt the most addictive and compelling puzzler the Saturn has yet seen.

OVERALL 92

If you only buy one puzzle game, make it Bust-A-Move 2. So addictive it's frightening.

VIRTUA FIGHTER KIDS
SEGA
£29.99
1-2 PLAYERS
BEAT 'EM UP





This is essentially a reworking of Virtua Fighter 2, itself the best 3D beat 'em on the face of the planet. So why is this worth investing in if a) You've already got Virtua Fighter 2 or b) You were never interested enough to buy it in the first place? Well, it's a tenner cheaper than most games for a start.



It's also the most advanced beat 'em up the Saturn has ever seen – VF Kids runs 20% faster than VF2, features mid-round replays, new combos and more camera angles and dramatic finishes. There's a lot to discover, and at this bargain price it's definitely worth going for if you haven't already got Virtua Fighter 2. If you have got VF2, VF Kids' new features might seem like garnish you can live without.

OVERALL 92

Bridges the gap until VF3, but some might be put off by the similarities to VF2 and the kitsch overload.

ALIEN TRILOGY
ACCLAIM
£44.99
1 PLAYER
DOOM





You are the Alien films' heroine, Ripley, and you pursue your monstrous extraterrestrial quarry with an armoury of devastating weaponry. The gunplay is more spectacular, the explosions more impressive and the bloodbaths even gorier, but the name of this game is essentially Doom. The corridor scenario is ideal for a recreation of the Alien films' combat sequences, and the lighting effects seen here contribute to a genuinely creepy atmosphere. Had this game appeared sooner it would have cornered a huge market, but Alien Trilogy is up against Exhumed and the forthcoming Hexen – both of which are more technically accomplished.

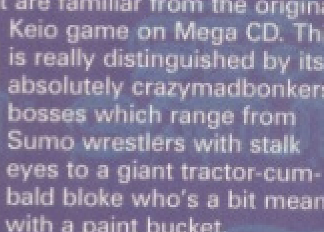


OVERALL 88

While still impressive and atmospheric, Alien Trilogy is fast becoming outclassed.

KEIO FLYING SQUADRON 2
JVC
£44.99
1 PLAYER
PLATFORM





In an Out Now awash with mega games, Keio Flying Squadron 2 looks quite modest in comparison. While nothing groundbreaking, this is a frantic and completely bizarre platformer which is a lot more fun than rival titles like Astal, Gex and Johnny Bazookatone. Just about everything gets thrown into the technicolour mix here – underwater stages, rollercoaster sequences and puzzle sections stand alongside shooting levels that are familiar from the original Keio game on Mega CD. This is really distinguished by its absolutely crazymadbonkers bosses which range from Sumo wrestlers with stalk eyes to a giant tractor-cum-bald bloke who's a bit mean with a paint bucket. Seasoned gamers might find this all a bit too kitsch and, more importantly, a bit too easy. If this doesn't put you off then you're in for a treat.



OVERALL 81



Junior gamers will go for Keio's colourful mix of game-styles and manga madness.



Can it really be six years since I started this lark? During that time I have read the sublime, the ridiculous, the mispelt toss and all other shades in between. My identity has remained the most closely guarded secret in game lore. But from next month, I won't be answering all the letters. You now have a choice. If you want to make a serious point to all or any of the team, write to them at MEAN MAIL, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. If you want to have it out with me, write to YOB'S COLUMN at the same address.

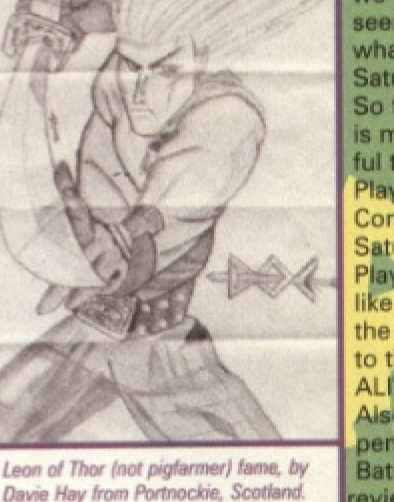
PUT 'EM AWAY LOVE

Dear Yob,
The motivation for me writing this letter comes from an American TV documentary that I watched about the social impact of videogames. The programme interviewed psychologists, and people that play games. One psychologist said that the attraction of games is the fascination between death and resurrection, because you play your Mortal Kombats and Street Fighters, kill people, have it done to you, and yet you can put in another pound, start a new game, and get your 'dead' character ressurected.



Our little fat French buddy Rayman and all his chums, as drawn by Chris Bell.

Playing a game is a very one-on-one affair, where you decide the outcome by reacting to the game's environment. This acts on your subconscious and tells you violence is acceptable, without you knowing. Apparently. At this point I was thinking that these people have a fair point, although I did not agree with their views that violent games cause people to be violent. Video games are an ESCAPE. They are not real, not to be taken seriously, and why haven't Tom and Jerry been condemned for the violence that is in their cartoons?
I discussed this programme with my parents, who did not wholly agree with me or the programme, but agreed that videogame violence does de-sensitise real violence. They said that a lot of people cannot differentiate between the violence in real life and the violence in games.
I had to get this off my chest, because it annoys me that people need something to blame for all the real life violence, and they choose games, whose sole purpose is to entertain.
Yours sincerely
Ben Tapp, Brighton
YOB: People have been punching each other's lights out from the time they discovered they had fists. We might seem to live in a violent society, but ours is one of the safest in the world. Really nasty living conditions seem to go hand in hand with aspects like poverty, prejudice and religious intolerance, all of which are more threatening than even the most violent videogame. There's an opposite view of the argument that says violence is 'catharsis', that means by the process of getting it out your system in a make-believe way, you lose the urge to do it in real life. You might use Japan as evidence of that. Tokyo has hundreds of arcades, but is a relatively safe city.



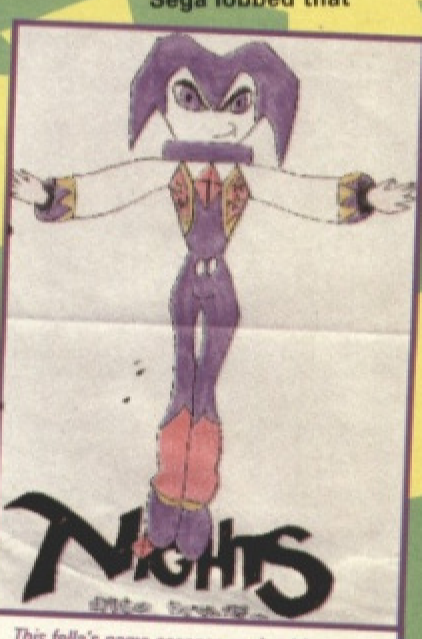
Leon of Thor (not pigfarmer) fame, by Davie Hay from Portnockie, Scotland.

RIGHT, TOERAG!

Dear Yob,
Samantha and Gemma my true loves
Skin sweeter than two doves
Kissing in the night with a soft candle light
We meet each other at half past six
Our love is like a ton of bricks
Your beautiful faces that everyone chases
Your [sic] sweeter than a choclate cake
That was a poem to the girls I fancy Samantha and Gemma Widowson.
From,
Martin King, Carlton Notts
YOB: What is this? It's not bloody I'm-Just-Seventeen-and-It's-Bliss and all that poncey crap. I'm missing any referencing to games in your poem, and you're using my page as some sort of contact act for a threesome. Pervert.

NOTHING WORSE THAN A BENT COPPER

Dear Yob,
Why does everyone seem to think the Saturn is the same as the PlayStation? They are completely different. The Saturn has three proccessing chips, the PlayStation only one. Also the Saturn has better 2D powers. My brother owns a Saturn and keeps his friends jealous with X-Men, and will make them cry on their knees when he gets UMK3.
Now Squaresoft have found several DSP's that Sega never said anything about, which means we haven't seen half of what the Saturn can do. So the Saturn is more powerful than the PlayStation. Comparing the Saturn to the PlayStation is like comparing the Spectrum to the STILL ALIVE C64. Also, what happened to your Batman Forever review on the Game Gear?
Ray Burt, Devon
YOB: Does everyone think that? I couldn't give a toss about the average opinion of a Playstation owner. I wouldn't get that excited about the Squaresoft thing, it was just a rumour, and I hardly think Sega lobbed that much expensive hardware in and then 'forgot' about it. Batman Forever? We were going to review it, but then somebody needed something to prop open the office window with. Believe, me, it's much more useful for that.

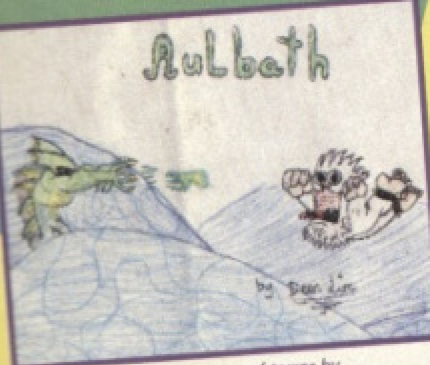


This fella's name escapes us, but it's a cracking picture from Jonathan Rowbotham.

WATCH IT, HE'S TOOLED UP!

Dear Yob,
I've been a big fan of your mag for ages now, and have written to you

with no reply, many times. Yet I forgive you for this mild crime.
I have a fear for my Saturn. Every now and again when I load a game the starter screen (grey with Sega Saturn) begin to flicker, with many lines flashing upon it. Then it cuts to the screen which you play music CDs on. You can't load the game. It's not dust, as I ensure my Saturn is cleaned thoroughly, and all the wires, etc. are connected.



Dark Stalkers' tidal wave of terror by Deen Lim. Yeah, cute.

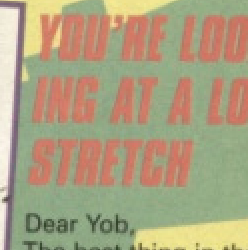
So what is it?
Also, just a couple of things I'd like to get sorted. My mate owns a PlayStation and is all wound up about games like Mortal Kombat Trilogy and Resident Evil. Will you please help me by telling me when these games will come out on the Saturn.
There a complete letter without insults. I hope this letter is answered, or I'll have to slit my wrists with frustration. No pressure. See ya.
P.S. Please don't take the piss out of Emeny as it really winds me up.
Michael Emeny, Scunthorpe
YOB:Hold it with the butter knife, your letter is finally answered. Pity it's a bit of a crap letter to finally get a reply. Anyway, your Saturn problem is probably the mains connection. Ensure the lead is really far in. If it's not the lead it's probably just inside the machine, where the power is adapted. Unless it gets really frequent, I'd ignore it. You can get Ultimate MK now, which is better than PSX MK3, and Resident Evil 2 should be next year. Better still, get a copy of Fighting Vipers and rub their noses in it.

GO! GO! GO!

Dear Yob,
Why dos Sega allow naff games a release on their top console?
I mean, Mortal Kombat 2 – who needs it?
Too many bad games will send us back to the 16 bit days, and we all remember The Great Waldo Search and Incredible Hulk. The majority of toss games flop and push game prices up because companies need to recoup losses. One example of the past is Earthworm Jim selling poorly and Jurassic Park being a big hit. So come on Sega. Kill off the poo.
Lee Murphy, Merseyside
YOB:I think last year Sega were secretly happy for anyone bringing out Saturn games, even ones as bad as MK2 or Old Granny's Knackers Adventure. Now the quality threshold is much higher, and there's not very many truly tragic games. This all came about by Sony successsfully dissing the machine, and a few 'expert' opinions in the press from people who embrace corporate wisdom pretty glibly. With any luck, the days of poo are numbered.

Toy Story's Mr Potatohead dug up by Joseph Spademan from Liverpool. Ta!

YOU'RE LOOKING AT A LONG STRETCH



Dear Yob,
The best thing in the old Mean Machines was that you'd insult readers who asked for it. I'm asking for it. Do your worst.
Thank you very much, sir.
R. Swiper, Clacton
YOB:A message that warms my heart. They obviously still teach manners on Cackton-on-sewage. As a basis for a conversation, though, it doesn't offer much. Where's the sport in insulting the least significant pleb in the universe?

The Era of Yob as we have known him has now ended, but the era of MEAN MAIL is very much begun. First letter to head the all-new letters concept will get a mystery piece of old cack from Marcus' drawer.



Time for more potato waffle to fill out these ridiculous protracted intro boxes. Must get Nick to do something about them for next issue. Actually, Q&A will be part of our pullout section as of next issue, with a new look and a new brief to answer even more of your letters, and less of my ramblings, with more chance of you getting into print. In the meantime, pay special attention to the reply to 'The Import Question' as it clears up the misconceptions surrounding adaptors and import discs many of you hold. Then send YOUR letter to: 'SHINY AND NEW Q&A', at the regular MEAN MACHINES address.

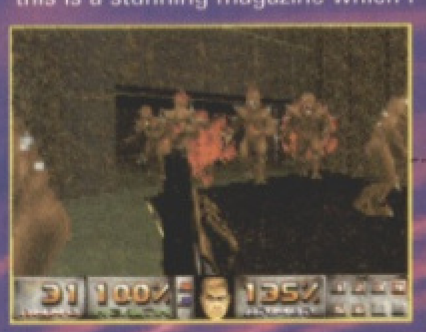
VIC AND BOB

Dear Gus,
Being as I'm going retro mad at the moment (you always were – DAN), please could you answer the following questions for me.
1. Having just bought Space Harrier on import for £55.00, and the Gradius Deluxe Pack for £60.00. Will these titles will be released in the UK, and if so, will they be at a budget price?
2. I'm also planning on buying Afterburner and Out Run (the greatest road racer EVER), but have read in C&VG that all the games will be released on one disk in the UK. Is this true?
3.Will they be converted to run full screen and full speed?
4.In last month's EDGE, they stated that Bubble Bobble and Rainbow Islands are only going to be released on the PC and PlayStation. Please tell me they are wrong, as these games still rank among the most playable platform games ever.
5.When will Daytona Deluxe be released?
6.Last of all, I've recently being playing this new Sega coin-op. I've forgotten what it's called, but you are in a helicopter and you shoot people Virtua Cop style whilst swooping and spinning all over the place. Is there any news of this game coming out for the Saturn?
Mr Rik Felton, Newcastle Upon Tyne

GUS:**1. Sucker! Space Harrier will be released on a single disc with Outrun and Afterburner too for probably £45 Gradius will never be released here.**
2. See qs. 1.
3. This is the current plan from Sega UK.
4. We reviewed the Bubble Bobble 2/Rainbow Islands pack last month — very nice and these were Saturn discs we reveiwed.
5. Late November/early December.
6. Gunblade N.Y. No news of a conversion but the pattern of arcade-Saturn is a well established one. Oh, Dan sends his love and asks if you're still a Michael 'King of Pop' Jackson fan. Aoiw!

HUDSON AND HALLS

Dear Gus,
Please will you answer the following questions, as it is vital for my world take-over plans next year.
1. Do you have a release date or price for the stunning Dark Saviour?
2. Have you heard anything about Gremlin's sequel to Loaded, Reloaded?
3. Any further news on Torico?
4. Will Capcom ever release Resident Evil? If so, when?
5. Any more news on Sonic X-treme or Bug Too?
6. Will you ever release a demo disk on the cover of your excellent mag?
7. Why are GT going to release Doom, even though it has been out classed, out done and overshadowed by several better games (Exhumed, Quake and Duke Nukem 3D)?
Finally, keep up the good work as this is a stunning magazine which I



would never miss.
Jamie Slater, Oxon

GUS:**1. Japan is out, with English conversion hopefully just before the year's out. Probably £50 for this epic game.**
2. It was planned to be a joint release, but only development on Playstation has actually started. But now Loaded has done better on Saturn than Gremlin predicted, this is 'under review'.
3. To be frank, no.
4. Apparently, Saturn goes straight to RE 2, but there is still no official Capcom word on this.
5. Sonic X-Treme as previously known is DEAD. Bug Too! has slipped back into development purgatory as the Americans seemingly get their house in order.
6. Next month, definitely next month!
7. GT is well aware that Doom has a loyal following and is a guaranteed money spinner. The Saturn only has Exhumed and Alien Trilogy at the moment. Thanks.

SAINT AND GREAVSIE

Dear Gus,
1. Are Sega going to ever release a decent tennis game for the Saturn?
2. In issue 47 when you had the preview of Actua Golf, you said there was an Actua Tennis later this year. Is it true?
3. Do you have a release date for Worldwide Soccer 97?
4. I have about £50 to spend on a game, which do you think I should get when they come out: NBA Action or Worldwide Soccer 97?
5. There are about 4-5 PlayStation mags and only one Saturn one. Why don't Mean Machines make one?
Thanks
Martin Liu, E. Sussex

GUS:**1. Sega themselves have no tennis projects, but Gremlin are in the early stages of creating Actua Tennis, and both Ocean and Telstar have games planned.**
2. See 1.
3. November is as specific as can be.
4. It has to be Worldwide (though NBA Action has been sorely underrated).
5.The Sega Saturn mag is our sister magazine and we both get on quite well as it is.

LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY

Dear Gus,
I've been writing to you for five months, without a reply. But I want you to answer some questions, so answer or my dog will eat you.
1. If the Saturn is 32-bit and so is the 32X, why don't people buy the £100 cheaper 32X?
2. I have got a Saturn with VF2, Sega Rally and Panzer Dragoon. I also have £95. What games should I buy?
3. My friend thinks Exhumed is possible on the Megadrive. Is he thick?
4. Did you know you look like Shun from VF2?
5. How much should I sell an unboxed Megadrive and an unboxed 32X for?
Peter Helts, Northampton



GUS:**1. Because the 32X is crap.**
2. Which is your favourite? If it's Rally, get Daytona CCE or maybe Wipeout. If it's VF2 get Fighting Vipers. If it's PD, get Panzer Dragoon 2. Also Bust-A-Move, NiGHTS, Worldwide Soccer, Tomb Raider etc.
3. Beyond thick. Dense.
4. No, because I don't. 5. £75.

BUB AND BOB

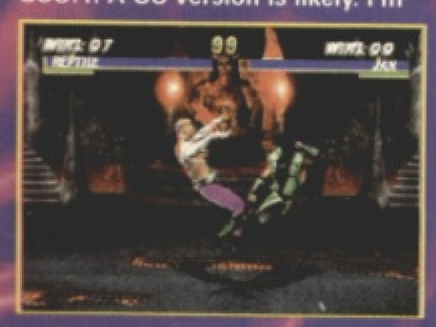
Dear Gus,
I've got a few questions to ask, so please could you answer them?
1. What's your best game for the Saturn?
2. When will Sonic X-Treme be released?
3. I've heard rumours that the Megadrive is going to die out. Is this true?
4. Is Daytona CCE going to be better than SEGA RALLY?



5. Do you think Whizz or Sonic 3D is best?
Lewis Marler (Age 11), Preston
GUS:**1. I like NiGHTS best.**
2. It's canned.
3. All machines go eventually.
4. As good as.
5. Sonic 3D.

MORK AND MINDY

Dear Gus,
1. Is UMK3 coming out on the Megadrive? Game Pro said it was a possibility and a mail order company has it listed.
2. Is MK4 going to be made? I heard that the graphics produced where not up to Williams standards and it was cancelled?
3. Is Marvel Super Heroes coming out on the Megadrive? It's coming out on the SNES.
4. How come only the Ultra 64 is getting Mortal Kombat 64? Mortal Kombat has never been restricted to certain systems before.
5. Will VF Animation on the Megadrive have Shun and Lion in it?
6. Which is the proper sequel to NBA JAM, NBA Hangtime or NBA Extreme?
Cheers
Iain Pankhurst, South Africa
GUS:**1. A US version is likely. I'm**



not convinced on the idea.
2. No real news on MK4, but I expect it will come, as night follows day.
3. Nope.
4. MK64 is just a clever way of doing MK on yet another format.
5. This is a matter of debate, and the reason why we haven't featured more on VF MD yet.
6. Both are.

PINKY AND THE BRAIN

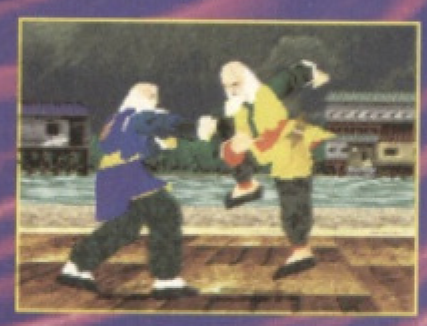
Dear Gus,
I have a Sega Game Gear and I find it almost impossible to get games for it. I would be very grateful is you could give me a list of retailers or mail order companies that sell games for the Game Gear.
Miss E. MacRae, Ross-shire
GUS**Game and Electronic Boutique still carry some GG stuff, along with larger Virgins and HMVs. Few Mail Order shops carry large stocks, but try ACE Consoles 0171 439 1185. Check your local paper small ads and our Megamart pages.**

SID AND NANCY

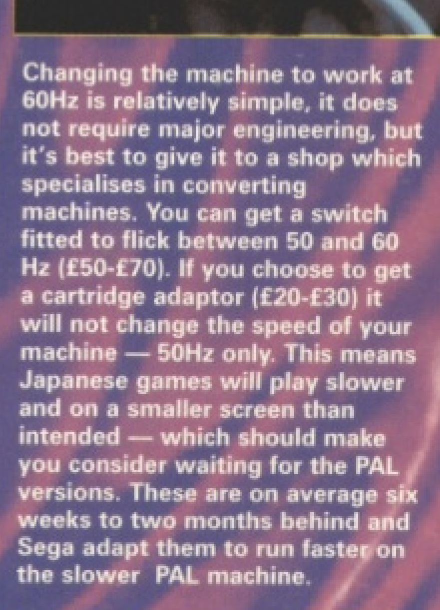
Dear Gus,
Please answer some questions for me.
1. When is Football Manager coming out on the Saturn?
2. Any other footie management sims expected?
3. When can we expect Duke Nukem 3D?
4. Finally, Euro 96 is so overrated. OK, it looks brill, but it plays like s**t!!!
Geo, Glasgow
GUS:**1. No one's expecting it.**
2. Nope.
3. Middle of next year.
4. Euro wasn't quite as good as we thought, but it's still good.

THE IMPORT QUESTION

Dear Gus,
I am a new Saturn owner. I also own a Sony PlayStation, but am not writing for that. I'm writing because I'm a bit puzzled.
1. I'm going to buy a convertor to play Jap and US games but will they still run at a quicker speed than British?
2.What is the best TV for use with the Saturn plus for the above question?
3. If I was playing the UK version of VF2 on a scart system, would the Jap or US version run faster?
It would be helpful if you could answer these puzzling questions
Steven Brown, Scotland
GUS:**1. No, your UK machine will run at 50Hz.**
2. One with a SCART input for a clear picture. As your machine runs at 50, you won't have a problem with picture



compatability.
3. No let me sort this for you. When the machine is manufactured, it's configured for the territory it will be sold in (all are made in Asia). Machines that go to the UK are configured to run at 50Hz, so they will work with PAL system TVs, using the old-style round aerial connection.



Changing the machine to work at 60Hz is relatively simple, it does not require major engineering, but it's best to give it to a shop which specialises in converting machines. You can get a switch fitted to flick between 50 and 60 Hz (£50-£70). If you choose to get a cartridge adaptor (£20-£30) it will not change the speed of your machine — 50Hz only. This means Japanese games will play slower and on a smaller screen than intended — which should make you consider waiting for the PAL versions. These are on average six weeks to two months behind and Sega adapt them to run faster on the slower PAL machine.

SALLY AND JAKE

Dear Gus,
Could you please answer these questions.
1. My mate said UMK3 is coming out on the Megadrive. Is this true?
2. How did you rate Chaotix and Metal Head on the 32X?
3. Which is better – Earthworm Jim 1 or 2?
4.Will there be any more Strike games on the Megadrive?
5. When is Segaworld opening? Why don't you do a feature on it?
6. Which is better, Vampire Hunter or UMK3?
7.Why is Baku Baku coming out on the Game Gear and not the Megadrive?
8. Any news on Sonic Fighters?



Thomas Prior, Dagenham
GUS:**1. See above.**
2. Chaotix is lame, Metal Head slightly better.
3. Jim 2.
4. No.
5. We have, in issue 44. Segaworld haven't supplied us with more info. It opened September 7th.
6. Vampire Hunter.
7. I don't know, it's not fair.
8. The arcade version is finished and looks good. Saturn conversion is definite – I estimate March 97.

Things may change as of next month, but Q&A stays the same. We'll be answering even more queries, so write now.

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I am looking for a pen pal who likes game gears and has got one of his or her own, call Lee on 01538 384359

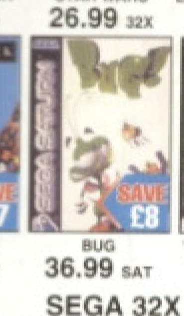
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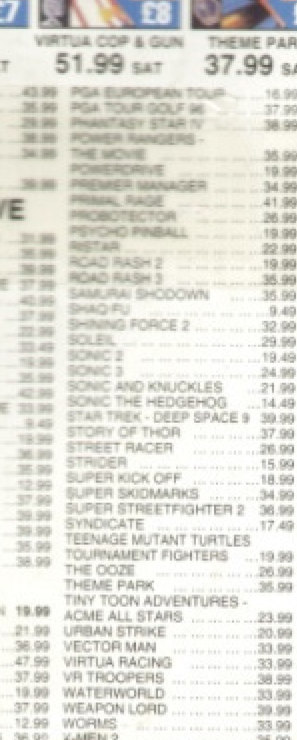
NEW MEAN MACHINES
NEW DANGER
Let the competition crap themselves. Next month is the fiftieth issue of MEAN MACHINES, and it's all change here at EMAP Towers. All the old rubbish has been turfed out (that includes Marcus and Claire). You must get next month's landmark epoch-making issue with its cool new look, and as an added enticement, we're giving away a Saturn disc with PLAYABLE demos of the hottest games of the year*. And who could be more suitable to front the New Face of MEAN MACHINES than Shiny Entertainment, who will be revealing their blockbusting new platformer for '97, Wild 9. Don't miss it.
50TH ISSUE OUT NOVEMBER 1st
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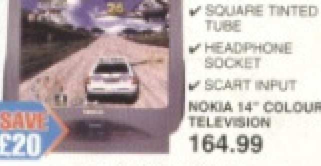
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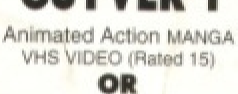
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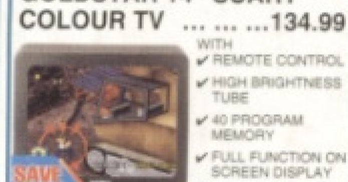
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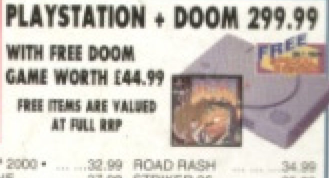


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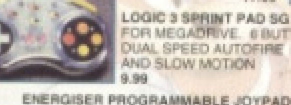
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